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ASHCOMBE CHURCHYARD.

BY EVELYN BENSON.

~~~~~  
" He walk'd the earth as those must walk whose minds  
One motive urges, and one object binds ;  
In youth's first flush he cast all joy away,  
And only lived that life might bring one day ;  
Around one centre all his powers he brought,  
And crush'd his soul beneath one burning thought,  
And that one thought was VENGEANCE ! "

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ASHCOMBE CHURCHYARD.

CHAPTER I.

THE DOCTOR AND THE RECTOR OF ASHCOMBE CHURCH.

" This is the gentleman I told your ladyship
Had come with me before, but that his mistress
Did hold his eyes lock'd in her crystal looks—
Nay, sure I think she holds them prisoners still."

SHAKESPEARE.

MRS DAVENPORT was now quite well, and Dr Campbell had commenced a period of voluntary exile from the Vicarage for about ten days or so.

The fact was, Mr Warner had actually come from Sussex to visit his daughter, having heard of her accident from Davenport, who honestly wrote him a whole account of it. So he wished to satisfy himself by a personal inspection that she was quite right again. Of all people on earth Campbell detested Mr Warner : he laid to his charge all the sins he had ever committed since he was driven from his father's hearth ; he had cauterized the fountain of his heart's blood, and sent him desolate, hopeless, aimless, alone on the billows of a tempestuous world, to be buffeted, tempted, overlooked, without that blessed haven to fix his eye on which was to be the reward of all his toil. If that tyrant had left him the dove that his God had prepared for him, he would have been nestling in its breast for the last seven years, sinless, useful, happy. Now what was he ? A solitary man, without a home, without an object on which he could lavish an honest, free, devoted love in the face of all the world. His idol, the gift of his Maker to him, was called another man's wife, considered herself such, and must

be treated accordingly ; he himself must be ashamed of his holiest feeling, and must consider the slightest demonstration of it as no better than a crime. Mr Warner had converted the highest sentiment man can entertain—a single and ever-enduring attachment to a perfect woman—into a base encroachment on a brother's rights, a perplexing disturbance of a wife's most sacred duties. It was easy to say, let him get a wife for himself, and create a little home around him. The affections could not be marshalled like guardsmen, called off from one station, posted at another, and be in full readiness, when the rout came, to quit Mrs Jenkins, and take up their quarters with Miss Jones. No wonder he hated Mr Warner and shunned him as he would a hungry boa-constrictor.

Mr Warner, on his part, was very well inclined to make friends with Campbell. He had received most gratifying accounts of his attention to the family on every occasion from Mr Davenport, and he felt greatly obliged to him for his devotion to his grandchildren. He knew he had settled at Northwood before Amelia went there, so there could have been nothing concerted between them in that respect,—though it was odd that they should be thrown together again ; but he had no fear of him now, he had of course forgotten his boyish fancy, or had changed it into a friendship that seemed very valuable. So he begged of his son-in-law to ask him to dine, which was done immediately, but without success. Campbell declared he had nearly affronted the Abbey family by his neglect, and he must try and make up for it by doubling his attentions for some time to come ; Miss Neville had asked him repeatedly to Sunville, and he was engaged to dine there to-morrow, with sundry other excuses, which Milly understood very well, but which much vexed poor Davenport, who thought it very ungracious of him that he would not come to meet his father's old friend ; but his wife settled it as usual by,—“Arthur, dear, excuse him, he is not like other people ;” and, as she was not offended at his slighting her father, the husband considered it no business of his to be so. Mr Warner, on hearing of his refusal, suspected he had still some lurking grudge against him, and spoke of him no more.

So Dr Campbell had time enough to devote to the two young ladies, who, totally unknown each to the other, seemed to be vying with one another who should soonest sow the wind and reap the whirlwind.

He first went to Northwood Abbey, and sat for a good while with Lady Caroline ; the gentlemen were out, and she had him entirely to herself. He had the usual sweet, gentle, reserved manner which always distinguished him when in her house ; he was the same man who had attended her all the winter—but different, oh ! very different, from the person she had met at the Vicarage. However, she would not think of that day—it was ecstasy to have him near her again, conversing with herself alone ; safe from Mr Davenport's troublesome brats ; far from Mr Davenport's beautiful, conceited wife. When he rose to go she reminded him of the pedestrian excursion he was engaged to take with her and the Misses Bolton ; he was to name the day when he would be free ; as to the ladies they were always at leisure. The Misses Bolton and their brothers, or one at least, were to come to breakfast at the Abbey on whatever morning he could join them :—

“So,” she said in conclusion, “do just let us know, as soon as you are able, when they can spare you from the Vicarage.”

He did not like to have it thought that he lived at the Vicarage.

“Oh, I don't go there now,” answered he ; “Mrs Davenport is well.”

These few words shot an intense joy through her heart. Things were all coming right again ; she had been making herself miserable for nothing. He readily named the following Thursday for the walk ; it would be a great matter if he could manage to have some engagement for every day during Mr Warner's stay ; it would stop Davenport's teasing.

The day after this visit he went to dine at Sunville. The Routledges, Mr James, Major and Mrs Smyth (whose inquiries for her foot had exasperated Miss Neville so much), and some other gentlemen in the neighbourhood, were invited to meet him. He made it a point to be as civil and affable as possible ; the idea that he had been rude and unkind to Miss Neville still haunted him, and they, so far from resenting it, had given him a fee three times as large as he had a right to expect, so he was particularly anxious to be agreeable on this occasion, and he succeeded to perfection. He was remarkably attentive to Miss Neville—every one noticed it. He conversed with her in a little private *tête-à-tête* for half an hour during the evening, and gave her the names of three books which she was to read in succession, to obtain a

good knowledge of the history of modern Europe ; he consented to sing the moment he was asked ; he avoided mournful ditties ; he sang a playful song from the Spanish in exquisite style ; in fact, it was no other than that in Mr Lockhart's collection, beginning with—

“ Since for kissing thee, Minguillo,
My mother scolds me all the day ; ”

and it is impossible to describe the delicacy and archness which his manner threw into this little piece, which, even when simply read, strikes us as one of the most naïve, sly, happy trifles that was ever produced. When he came to the concluding verse :—

“ Out upon you, false Minguillo !
One you give but two you take ;
Give me back the two, my darling—
Give them,—for my mother's sake ! ”

A particular kind of half smile lurked about his mouth, and those to whom the song was new received the unexpected finale with a perfect burst of admiration. A shout of “ Encore ! ” came from every gentleman in the room ; the delicate, sensitive man coloured ; they were treating him like a public singer. Mrs Routledge, who was near him, understood his feeling directly.

“ No, no,” she said, “ only once.”

He smiled, shook hands with her, and retired to a seat.

The whole company acknowledged to themselves that he was a perfect gentleman, and a most fascinating man. As to Miss Neville—how shall we describe her feelings ? As usual, she thought she had on former occasions admired him as much as it was possible for her to do ; but he was this evening so superior to anything he had been before, that it was no wonder new emotions still more powerful shook her whole frame. When would he culminate ? When would he reach his climax and appear before her in full glory ? Would he then slay her with his brightness, like Zeus, or draw her into himself and raise her to his own level ?

The hero of the evening was the first to withdraw. When he was gone several persons who had known him for the last six years or so crowded round the heiresses. A shower of congratulations commenced.

“ Well, ladies, you have wrought a most miraculous change in this doctor of ours,” said one.

"I did not think him capable of being so agreeable," said another.

"I know him these seven years and I never heard him sing a good song before," said a gentleman who was quite of Captain Lewis's creed in that respect.

"I think," said Mr James, "that if he wished to play the part of Minguillo, he would find plenty of ladies very anxious 'to please their mother,' and to insist on getting back their property."

"Let any lady who differs from Mr James hold up her hand—the ayes have it! ha, ha, ha!" said Major Smyth, who was so far self-supporting that he kept himself in constant roars of laughter at his own wit, and gave his hosts no trouble in entertaining him.

"He seems to be very well acquainted with all kinds of literature," remarked a gentleman who had read but little himself; "though I am sure he kept it all closely bottled up until to-night; for my part, I thought he knew nothing but those medical books."

In short, several of Dr Campbell's friends seemed to have made acquaintance with him this evening for the first time.

"See the magical power of the fair sex," cried Mr Routledge, waving his hand as he approached to take a share in the discussion.

"Humph! only a certain portion of the fair sex," muttered a man with two elderly daughters at home, who, having been setting their caps at Campbell for the last five years, had now subsided into quiet resignation.

"Joking apart," said Mr Routledge, patting Maria Neville on the back, as she happened to be close to him, "we really have great occasion to be thankful to you, for giving us an opportunity of seeing that this man *can* be pleasant, and lively, and obliging, and can sing a merry song; I, for one, won't let him sulk any more."

"Oh! I declare," answered she, "I renounce all claim to having the least share in the metamorphosis; if such has taken place, Alicia deserves all the credit of it."

"You need not say that, Maria," interrupted Miss Neville, "you have just as many attractions as I have."

"Only in one point are your attractions equal, my queen," whispered Mr Routledge to Miss Neville, whom he liked infinitely better than he did Maria, "and that is a point that no one can take into his consideration when those blue eyes are raised up to him."

She coloured and turned quickly away from him; and he was afraid she was displeased with him for speaking thus in refer-

ence to Campbell, whom he considered as really quite beneath her notice.

When Miss Neville went to her dressing-room that night she sat down in her arm-chair and began to reflect. That some wonderful change for the better had come over Dr Campbell, every one in the room had noticed : it could be no fancy on her part ; what could be the cause of it ? something in her house certainly that was not to be found elsewhere. He had been particularly attentive to herself that evening, and had done everything he thought would please her ;—Mr Routledge must have noticed something, by the way in which he spoke ; he was quite ready to agree with Maria that she had no part in effecting the remarkable improvement, and in fact he had hinted to herself that her individual attractions could account for everything ; and Mr Routledge knew Campbell long and well, and was a very good judge of the kind of persons that pleased him, besides being a very shrewd observer of mankind in general.

Finally she worked herself up to a state of delighted certainty. But still there is nothing like the testimony of another party in addition to our own. She dismissed her maid, and went to her room-door and called out, " Letty Cope, are you in bed ? "

" Oh dear, no ! " answered she, mincingly ; " I am standing in the window this quarter of an hour admiring the moon. "

" Then leave the moon to herself and come here. " Miss Cope came directly. It must be noticed that this lady had now fully discovered the state of Miss Neville's heart, and was determined to act in the manner which she judged would be most acceptable to her patroness.

" Dr Campbell was greatly excited to-night : don't you think so ? " began Miss Neville.

" No, not excited ; something deeper than that ; I should not call him an excitable person, " answered Cope.

" Well, he was very different from what he was when he was attending me. "

" Oh, certainly ; he feels himself more an equal when he comes as a guest, than as a professional man. Poor fellow ! I hope he will not rue the day he first came here. "

" He is our equal in every situation, " said Miss Neville sharply ; " and what do you mean by ' something deeper, ' and by saying you hope he won't rue the day he ever came here ? "

" Oh, nothing, only—"

"Only what, Letty Cope? do you dare to trifle with me?"

"I mean, that if he comes too much here, he might remember, when it is too late, the great difference between his position and yours."

"I take for granted you mean fortune by position; and what matter is a difference of fortune when everything else is equal, and when there is ample provision for both on one side?"

"If that is your opinion," said Miss Cope, "I'm sure I am not ashamed to confess it is mine too; but you know one thinks one ought to speak according to the rules of society."

"You know, Letty Cope, that I am no conventionalist; tell me instantly what you think about his feelings."

After a little hesitation she answered:—

"I think that if you do not wish to make him happy, you ought to avoid making him miserable, and to cease encouraging him to come here."

And the artful toady, considering she had said quite enough, hurried out of the room.

Miss Neville went to bed in a state of extreme excitement; every one was discovering it; in fact she herself was the only one inclined to doubt it. He was ready to ask her, it was evident, if he could only indulge in the slightest hope of acceptance. We must leave her planning various ways of supplying him with that hope, without compromising her dignity.

Dr Campbell, weary with exertions to which he was unaccustomed, and for which he had no taste, was glad to get back to his humble cottage and his faithful old servant, who always met him on his return at night with a cordial greeting and a basin of posset, or whey, or whatever she thought most suitable for him. He drank a little to please her, and then went up to his room, opened the back window and looked across the town towards the Vicarage on the hill. There was still light in one window, but it was not Milly's: no; she was comfortably asleep in her bed, and Davenport of course by her side. Well, why should he not? it was better to have him a good husband than a bad one. It would not improve matters certainly if he was at this moment crowing on the bridge of Henry-street, or rollicking along River-street, chucking the girls under the chin, and treating the lads to beer:—Milly at home sitting up for him, with blanched cheek and dim and weary eyes. The light was in the window of the best bed-room, so it was probably Mr

Warner who was up still ; why would not the old villain go to bed ? it was not his conscience that was keeping him awake ; very lightly it sat on him that he had had his (Campbell's) happiness in his hands, and that he had dashed it against the stones. But he would leave it all to the Nemesis who would come sooner or later ; he was convinced of that. Alas ! she was coming with steady pace, nearer and nearer ; prepared with one blow to punish every delinquent. At last the light vanished, and it was to be hoped the victim might take a little rest too : he threw himself down on his narrow French bed and his hard mattress, neither knowing nor caring that north and south of his cottage two hearts lapped in luxury and bedded in down were throbbing and breaking for him.

Thursday morning arrived, and Dr Campbell prepared himself, at an early hour, to go to breakfast at the Abbey, and attend Lady Caroline and her friends to Blackheath Castle. -It was really not worth seeing ; a rough broken fragment of a tower on the top of a bleak hill ; but he had told her a little legend connected with it, and she had asked him to take her to see it, glad of any excuse to spend a summer's day walking through the fields and woods with him for her companion. The Earl's coach was sent early in the morning to Laburnum Lodge, to fetch to breakfast as many of the Boltons as wished to come. Lady Caroline had particularly specified Lucy, whom she was anxious to have to spend a day with her, as the poor little girl had not been at the Abbey since the family came there, and Caroline knew she would be much amused by all the beauties of nature and art that were collected there, though to herself they were so wearisome and tasteless. Edmund, who had been at the Abbey much oftener than George, agreed to stay at home and have an eye to his father, and look in on some poor people, who were at present the only patients on his master's list. So Sarah, Lucy, and George, the two latter in high spirits, got into the coach, and were quickly whirled to Lord Northwood's stately habitation. George gave Lucy strict injunctions not to betray her rawness and ignorance by noisy expressions of wonder and admiration, but to enjoy everything in the silence of her own heart ;—which she promised faithfully to do.

When they arrived, they found Campbell already come, and the Northwood family all assembled in the breakfast parlour. The Earl was in excellent spirits ; he was overjoyed at the great im-

provement in his daughter, about whom he had been miserable since the day she visited at the Vicarage ; but now she seemed to have imbibed new life as she stood in the window chatting to Campbell. It was impossible for a man of the Earl's quickness to fail in perceiving that her happiness, and her health too, depended on the presence of that man ; and it struck him also, as a very possible occurrence, that she might end in saying that she was determined to marry him. This dread, unexpressed to any one, had taken forcible possession of him, and he was already beginning to debate in his mind how he should act under such perplexing circumstances. He also very naturally apprehended that Campbell, encouraged by her marked attentions, might secretly entangle her in an engagement, and the only way to prevent this would be to banish him instantly from the house ; —but that would certainly kill his child ; he was puzzled and distracted, and, in his inability to fix on any safe course, allowed things to run on in their usual channel.

Lady Caroline was in great spirits at breakfast ; she placed Campbell beside her, and made him assist her in filling out coffee ; joking him all the time about what she called his awkwardness, meaning, in reality, to direct the attention of the company to the grace and alacrity with which he fulfilled her every behest. She forgot, for the time, that the Davenport family existed ; she was a person ever ready to bid away from her memory any troublesome recollections or unpalatable facts ; she had been so accustomed to have every desire gratified, and everything painful immediately removed, that she considered the occupancy of her mind by such rude and tormenting visitors as we have named amounted almost to an absurdity ; she had never been worried in her life,—was not made to be worried ;—there must be a mistake somewhere ;—the thought could not be endured that anything destructive of her hopes and wishes had happened, or was to happen ; a report that she did not like must be a lie ; an unwelcome object that struck her senses was to be attributed half to fancy, and half to bad sight ; and thus, instead of looking troubles in the face like a brave soul, and schooling her heart to bear them, she pettishly turned away from them, as if they were malicious spectres, that only required the proper exorcism to make them glide in disgrace to their loathsome den. This was a disposition as far removed on one side from cheerful resignation as it was on the

other from the single-mindedness that "thinketh no evil;" but yet this feeble cowardice was not a primary element in her nature; it was, like many other of her defects, the fatal result of her wrong education.

When the repast was over they prepared to set out on their walk; Lady Caroline asked her brother whether he would be of the party, but he declined—rather stiffly, she thought; he had business elsewhere; she did not require his attendance, she was "so well *beau'd* already." He said this bitterly; in fact he was provoked at seeing an intimacy with Campbell renewed; he had noticed, long before his father had done, the change that took place in his sister the moment "this man" made his appearance; neither her cottage, nor Miss Bolton, nor anything except him, satisfied her; active steps must be taken to put a stop to the whole business; and the affairs which, he had pleaded, called him elsewhere, ended in an hour's solitary walk up and down the shrubbery, during which he meditated various plans for saving his sister from a "miserable," "degrading," and very probably "most unhappy *match*."

Meantime Lady Caroline, Dr Campbell, and the three Boltons, set out on their excursion. Their way lay at first by the public road, in an opposite direction from Ashcombe Church, on towards the northern end of Mr Purdon's parish. The scenery as they advanced became more interesting; they turned into some corn-fields and meadows, and, crossing a few stiles, arrived at a wood which covered the side of a long steep hill, at the base of which ran a broad walk—or rather a perfect colonnade of beeches, and limes, and elms, which, joining their branches overhead, formed a long beautiful arch, the perspective of which had a fine effect. On the right of this walk stretched the corn-fields and meadows, basking in the sun, which, not yet near the meridian, shot slanting lines of light across the path, wherever the massive trunks of the trees would permit them to enter.

"Why, this is charming!" cried George, as they plunged into the umbrageous avenue. "It was well worth coming to see, even if we did not expect the little further treat of a heap of grey old stones that your Ladyship has promised us at the end of our journey."

"Oh, now you need not be so smart," said she, laughing; "it is a very ancient ruin, and any trifle is valuable that leads people to make little simple parties for wandering about among

the beauties of nature without ceremony. I propose that we all say whatever comes into our heads."

"Exactly as if we were in Madame de Genlis's Palace of Truth, eh?" said Campbell, looking at her searchingly, as it seemed to her.

What did he mean? She blushed scarlet; she fancied he had discovered her feelings with regard to himself, for she was always suspecting, hoping, fearing something connected with her lamentable passion. George noticed her distress, it surprised him, and he thought it only right to come to her rescue.

"You seem a little afraid of that rule, Dr Campbell; if it was enforced you might be obliged to disclose mysteries that would amaze us."

He spoke at random, but Campbell bit his lips, frowned, and looked deeply annoyed. There are very few persons, indeed, to whom the Palace of Truth is an agreeable joke. Sarah endeavoured to turn the laugh against her brother.

"George, you just now very rudely anticipated Lady Caroline's proposal that we should say anything that came into our heads, by speaking in the most disrespectful terms of the old ruin she is going to show us; if that is your mode of talking in this unenchanted wood, it would be rather fearful to meet you in a place where you could put no check on yourself."

"Quite the contrary, I can assure you, young lady," answered he; "I will venture to say that I have not a thought in my head which I would not be ready, if required, to lay before my friends or the public without the least apprehension that I should awaken a feeling in any way injurious to myself."

And he looked through his clear honest blue eyes at Caroline and Campbell, with an expression of candour which they might well have envied.

"However, Lady Caroline," he added, "if I was rude to you, I beg your pardon."

"Not in the least," she cried; "do not speak of it."

While they were thus conversing, Lady Caroline, looking on, saw at a distance advancing towards them under the archway of the trees, a tall stately man in black, wearing a long-tailed coat and a shovel hat.

"How well that far-off figure looks!" exclaimed she to Campbell, "there was nothing wanting to complete the landscape but a figure exactly at that distance: you know we are all too

close together for any one to be viewed advantageously by the others."

She had been taught drawing well, and surveyed nature rather artistically.

"Too close together!" repeated Campbell, with his arch smile; "I am sorry you think so."

She laughed and looked delighted.

"Is this your first sentiment in the Palace of Truth? if so, it is an admirable beginning, and likely to disappoint the anticipations of some of our friends. But is that gentleman an acquaintance of ours? I am short-sighted."

Campbell looked up. His smile died off directly.

"It is some clergyman," he answered, curtly.

"Some clergyman!" cried George; "it is Mr Purdon; I am surprised you do not know him; I thought you were the most far-sighted of us all."

Campbell made no reply, but looked on the ground.

On came the rector of Ashcombe Church, graceful and dignified, with his "nova canities," his "prima et recta senectus;"—enough, and too much perhaps, still remained to Lachesis to twine; he needed not the "bacillum," but under his right arm he carried an umbrella, while his left hand held a polyglott Bible with silver clasps. When he reached them he raised his hat to Lady Caroline.

"Happy to see your Ladyship; you have a fine day for your walk."

He saluted the Boltons, and was passing on, when he suddenly spied Dr Campbell.

"Ha, Campbell!" he exclaimed, in a cordial and familiar tone, quite unlike his previous manner. He kindly extended his hand.

Sarah shot a glance towards the two as they advanced to meet one another. Mr Purdon's face was lighted by a gentle smile; Campbell looked up, frankly enough she thought, into the eyes of the rector; he received the proffered hand, wrung it, but kept his lips closely compressed together, and never a word he spoke. The rector walked on.

Lady Caroline stood still, and looked after him; and you may look after him, too, reader, if you choose, for you shall not have a nearer acquaintance with him; probably you do not deserve it. The servant of God, sincere (whatever we may think of

his opinions), hard-working, self-sacrificing,—in Ireland obeyed like a prophet, and consulted like an oracle,—in Italy and Spain canonized,—in England, because he is linked with the state, and recognized by the law, may be patronized by the church-going nobility and gentry, but by the mass of the people is held scarcely above scorn,—far below respect. We can understand the sceptic who, rejecting certain creeds as false, looks disapprovingly and disdainfully on the men who teach and propagate them ; but in what class shall we range those into whose heavy minds a doubt never entered, but yet who make a by-word of his name who advocates what they do not deny to be the truth, who speak with irony and ridicule of one whom they acknowledge to be the organ through which salvation is conveyed to their souls, when they bring their children to the baptismal font, and solicit the last sacrament for a dying relative ?

Lady Caroline continued to gaze until a bend in the path concealed Mr Purdon from her view. She then turned round and walked slowly on by Campbell's side.

"How I do grieve for that poor man!" she exclaimed. Then, as if a thought struck her, she said quickly to him : "You were here, were you not, when he lost his only child ? I suppose you attended her ;—was it consumption ?—do tell me what she died of."

"Of an inflammation in her bowels," answered he, seeming determined, when ladies chose to ask questions of this kind, to give them full satisfaction.

"Oh, yes," cried the giddy, thoughtless Lucy, "that is what people say ; but Mrs Miller thinks what she really died of was—"

"Well, upon my word, Miss Lucy," interrupted Campbell desperately, "it appears to me very hard that when the physician who attended her broadly states her disease, the opinion of an old woman should be quoted in correction of his."

He grew redder and redder every word he said, but when he had finished, the blood ebbed back to his heart, and left his cheek just the colour of "cream-laid" paper. He then rushed into the wood, followed by his dog (who, we forgot to mention, made one of the party), and scrambling up a steep path, overgrown with briony and blackberry brambles, he was soon lost amidst the underwood and scrub. Poor Lucy was astounded by the rebuke she had received ; Lady Caroline looked after

Campbell in dismay ; George coloured and bit his lips ; and Sarah stood petrified.

George was the first to speak, and opened a volley on Lucy. "I am astonished at you, Lucy ! Thoughtless and unfeeling as you are" (she was far from unfeeling), "I could not have supposed you would have had the courage—for it required incredible courage—to attack a physician for want of skill in his profession, and to set up the judgment of your nurse in opposition to his !"

Lucy burst into tears.

"I did not mean a bit of all that, George—"

"No, no," said Lady Caroline, whose natural disposition broke out when she was not prevented by jealousy ; "that is too strong ; she meant nothing of the kind ; she merely was rash in expressing herself ; very young people do not consider qualifications ; they are generally led by the opinion of those who are around them, and old servants assume a most positive tone."

"You are kind in excusing her," said Sarah ; "she is neither so foolish nor so audacious as she seems, but her great error lies in encouraging that servant so much, and in believing implicitly everything she says ; but still I hardly expected she would have introduced her as an authority on such an occasion as this ; no wonder Dr Campbell is angry, but I hope he will consider her youth and ignorance. I must arrange things on a better plan at home. I cannot express how vexed I am."

"I heartily wish I had not asked him anything about Miss Purdon !" said Caroline.

"It would have been better if you had not," said Sarah, "but you were not aware ;—it was a painful business ; she went off so suddenly, and he was rather young then, and had the whole responsibility on himself,—no other help could arrive in time ;—and she was such a loss ! I do not say he was ever blamed, but still he could not feel otherwise than very wretched for a good while. He has now recovered himself, of course ; at the same time people do not speak of her to him."

"Nor should I, I am sure, if I had known so much ; but no one ever tells *me* anything," said Caroline, pettishly. "I suppose," she continued, "that he is as much displeased with me as he is with Lucy ; do you think he will come back again to-day ?" and she looked anxiously up into the wood for some trace of him.

"I am convinced he will soon return," said George ; " it would be very traitorous of him to run away in this wild place ; at the same time be assured I am equal to any emergency that could occur. We had better walk on slowly."

They did so.

"Come, dry your eyes, Lucy," said Sarah ; "I don't think it would adjust matters much to have him find you crying when he rejoins us."

She did so, saying to George,—

"And am I to apologize to him when he comes back ? Oh, dear ! what shall I say ?"

"Say nothing at all," answered he ; "your wisest course is, not to make your presence known for the rest of the walk."

Here Troubadour suddenly bounded out of an opening in the trees, and frolicked up to them. "Ah, poor dear dog," cried Caroline, "where have you been ?" and she gave an anxious look in the direction whence the animal came, expecting the master to follow. "Come, you charming creature, let us have a race ;" and she ran on, holding him by the collar, and glancing rapidly on either side.

"She seems very fond of dogs," observed George, smiling.

"She is not a bit fond of dogs," said Sarah, drily. "When I was at the Abbey she hunted Lord Fitzarthur's pretty setter out of the breakfast-room every morning, though she knew it was a great pleasure to him to have it near him then, and to make it catch pieces of toast in its mouth."

"You are not fond of dogs, either," said he ; "you will not allow us one at home, and yet you seem partial to this setter."

"I am not at all partial to it," rejoined she, haughtily, "but I think Caroline owes her brother a little more than the permission to have his dog for half an hour in the breakfast-room every day."

"I fancy I can understand the sort of pleasure she feels at the return of Troubadour," said George, smiling again. "None of us like thunder, exactly ; but after a long drought we are very glad to hear a clap ; we think it the precursor of rain !"

Sarah made no remark on this. They were alone together for the present ; Caroline was a good way before them, bent on her object of finding "the lost Pleiad ;" Lucy was lagging behind, blowing her nose, and pulling down her green veil, and wishing heartily that Dr Campbell would never stop climbing

and running until he reached his cottage, where he would be safe from attacking people, and spoiling their day's amusement. After a pause George said to Sarah :—

"I think that was a very unwarrantable assault Campbell made on Lucy."

"You seldom take her part," answered Sarah, "and I should never have supposed you would take it now, particularly after having spoken so severely to her."

"I ain not taking *her* part, I am taking my own ; he trespassed on my province ; it was my duty to check and reprimand my sister when she spoke foolishly, and I was just going to do it when he burst forth."

"But you were not in time," said she, with a half smile ; "in a second more she would have rattled out with the disease, and that was what he was determined she should not do,—and who can blame him ? I am greatly ashamed of her ; my comfort for the day is spoiled."

"And mine too ; but tell me, Sarah, have you made any guess as to what disease she was going to name ?"

"Not the slightest ; and I am sure I will not ask either her or Mrs Miller ; and I will forbid Lucy ever mentioning Miss Purdon again to any one, or talking to Mrs Miller about her ; and I think we all had much better let the subject go to sleep for the future ; we shall not learn anything more satisfactory about it by questioning gossips and scandalmougers ; and ignorance on the point is perhaps the most desirable state for us to be in."

"Why, Sarah, one would think you suspected Dr Campbell of poisoning the girl, you have such a strange look in your face," answered he.

"No ; I have not the least suspicion of that," said she.

They spoke no more, for they had now nearly overtaken Lady Caroline, who, tired of running, was sauntering slowly with Troubadour by her side. George was just going to say something cheerful to her when he perceived Dr Campbell standing on a sort of fence, composed of turf and stones, and topped by an old thorn tree. It was about six feet above the pathway, but he reached the ground with a light spring and ran up to Lady Caroline. He held a bunch of wild flowers in his hand, and appeared quite himself again.

"I have been gathering these for you," said he to her ; "not that I mean to tease you with a lesson on botany to-day, but still

you might like them ; are not they pretty ? " Ha ! traitor " (to his dog), " and so you ran away from me ! but I cannot blame you when I see whom you preferred to me."

How enchanting the vision of him had appeared to her as he stood erect by the old thorn ! How winning was his look now, and how charming the sound of his voice, as he uttered these friendly flattering words ! Sarah, even, could not help admiring him, and thinking that though there was a mistake somewhere or another, yet nature seemed to have designed him for forming the happiness of some woman.

They walked on chatting, but with an awkward feeling on all sides, and soon reached the old ruin. It did not take much time to examine it, for there was very little remaining. They then sat down under its walls to partake of the luncheon which the house-keeper had sent on in a donkey-car. It was a regular gipsying party ; they spread their dishes, plates, decanters, and glasses on the green turf, and ranged themselves on the ground beside them. This was just what Caroline enjoyed,—it was so simple and new to her ; perhaps it was the happiest day of her life. The scene in the wood seemed forgotten now ; Campbell sat close to her on the grass ; there was a boyishness and a self-forgetfulness about him that she had never seen in him before, except on that hateful day at the vicarage. He appeared determined to make up, as much as possible, for the unfortunate schism that had scattered them all about after Lucy's unlucky speech, and he succeeded to perfection ; the charm of his conversation made time and place be forgotten. Lucy was very meek and silent at luncheon, and ate scarcely anything ; in fact she was nearly choking with shame and vexation.

Lady Caroline would have remained where she was until twilight, ay, and from twilight until dark, had not Sarah given a hint about damp,—another long walk before them,—the Earl's uneasiness,—and all those marplots that crush enjoyment at its greatest height.

" Indeed I think, Sarah," said George, finishing a glass of sherry, the best he had ever tasted, " you might leave it to Lady Caroline to propose the breaking up of our party ; as to the ground " (passing his hand over the short grass), " it is as dry as Gideon could have wished it on his first experiment. Lady Caroline, you have not appointed a Thaliarchus as is usual on

such occasions ; pray name me, and I will undertake to arrange the terms of the feast quite to your satisfaction."

"I am sure I don't know what Thaliarchus means," answered she, "but I will be happy to appoint you anything that will insure the continuance of our charming pic-nic for half an hour longer." And she began to think George a much pleasanter person than Sarah on an expedition of this kind.

"You may depend on me," said George ; "'Fly not yet' is invariably my motto on these delightful occasions."

"Oh, then I dub you Thaliarchus instantly ;—for I suppose it is something connected with knighthood,—which I am too ignorant to understand."

So saying she struck him playfully on the shoulder with her parasol.

"I humbly thank your Ladyship, and I would kneel before you as I ought, only the ground slopes so much in front of you that I fear I might roll down the hill and disgrace my new-made dignity. I suppose this is called Blackheath Hill from the total absence of that material."

"It was probably covered with heath when it was first so called," observed Campbell : "but was cleared in the progress of civilization ; can't you read a little history in names ?"

"It is stony enough as yet," said George, "and rather reserved in opening its bosom to the ploughshare ; but look at that rich valley below us !"

"Yes," said Campbell, "we are in a very good situation for surveying it ; there is the triumph of agriculture ! See, Lady Caroline, how those soft, rich colours succeed one another in some cases and form a lively contrast ; in other instances they melt into one another—various shades of green, yellow, olive, brown—every stage of maturity until the crowning month shall fling the last sheaf into our overflowing bosoms."

She lifted up her eyes, but they paused on his face, and did not travel on to the landscape which he so much admired.

"Truly," said George, filling his glass, "it is perfectly magnificent ! Much as I value the gifts of Bacchus, I declare without hesitation that I think Triptolemus (the person who taught men the use of the plough, ladies), was the greatest benefactor the world ever saw."

"Away with your Bacchuses and your Triptolemuses !" cried

Campbell ; " why should we be always falling back on Greek fables ? I say that the greatest benefactors man ever saw were the cherubim and the flaming sword that barred him from his dreamy and inactive Eden, and sent him forth into the wide world, making him know and feel that he was a progressive animal—that he must hew his way through the ' thorns and thistles,' which a kind after-thought had placed in it—that his brain must invent, his sagacity discover, his judgment direct, and his arm execute, before his soul could really enjoy. We may admire the imagination of the Greeks, but young people cling too long to their fables, quoting them constantly as if they were facts. According to them, every step a man took he trod, as it were, on some spring, that straightway threw up before him a picture of everything he was to do in his progress towards civilization. Come, Mr Thaliarchus ! has your term of office expired yet ? If not I must supersede you in my capacity of Health Preserver, and beg of the ladies to rise from the grass, and set out on their return home."

Lady Caroline jumped up as soon as Campbell expressed his wish, and the lad in attendance began to pack his little cart, while the pedestrians commenced retracing their steps.

" Well," said George, as they tripped along, " I think we agreed that the highly cultivated valley we have just left behind us is the finest physical sight on earth ; now, what is the finest moral one ? a great man struggling against adversity—eh, Dr Campbell ? "

" No," answered Campbell, " nor a great man coming to relieve him either, although Goldsmith thinks the latter the sublimest sight of all. The grandest moral picture is exhibited where we see the most sacred object of nature completely fulfilled ; that is, when we see two hearts, perfectly concordant in every thought and wish, indissolubly united ; leaning on one another, aiding one another, encouraging one another in the battle of life, with a love that neither time nor death can quench ; with a double power of doing good in their generation,—but as far as regards themselves, with only one heart, one soul, and one existence."

Lady Caroline and Sarah both started ; not even the latter had ever before heard him allude to anything connected with love :—but how beautifully he spoke when he did speak of it ! Oh, what a husband that man would make to any one who could completely match him in every shade of her character !

Caroline timidly lifted her eyes to glance at a face which she thought must, in uttering these sentiments, have a divine expression. But very human it looked, indeed, in its beauty, for it looked very sad; there even seemed to be tears in the dark eyes, but he appeared to bid them back quickly to their fount when she looked at him, for his cheek remained dry, and he gazed thoughtfully on the ground. What was his history? Did he care for any one? Had he been disappointed in any one? She supposed she should never know.

George was a capital addition to a party where matters had a tendency to become too sentimental.

"You pitch your pipe so high, sir, that I fear if we were to wait for such a blessed unanimity of tastes and feelings as you describe, we should remain old bachelors all our lives."

"I was not 'pitching my pipe' at all," answered Campbell, half disgusted; "I was answering your question of what I thought the finest moral sight on earth, and I persist in saying it is what I have described; that such instances are very rare is not to be wondered at, though it may be lamented; I should be very absurd if I advised people not to marry until they could realize such a state; I suppose I may do as I like myself."

So he had expressed himself pretty plainly at last! He was determined not to unite himself to any one who did not realize his ideal of a true partner, and could she flatter herself she was such? Surely not. She turned very pale. Campbell noticed it, and cried:—

"Oh, I am afraid you are tired! will you sit down on this bank, it is pretty flat?"

"I am not tired, indeed," said she, striving to rally; "if we delay now we shall be late for dinner."

"Come, then, sir knight of the parasol," said Campbell, tapping George on the back, "why do not you offer your arm to your liege lady, and support her during the remainder of the walk?"

Well, that was cool! How ready he was to accommodate her with George's arm, but he took care not to give her his own! He seemed resolved there should be always a gap between them;—or perhaps he was jealous that she had made George her knight, or her Thaliarchus,—whatever it meant,—little she cared. She wished young Bolton and his hard words far enough; if the two girls and she had no one but Campbell for their escort, they would have been much happier. Meantime George eagerly pre-

sented his arm, hoping her Ladyship would accept of his poor support. She could not decline, agreeing fully with him in her own mind that his support was very poor indeed, compared with what she might have had if he was at Laburnum Lodge.

Campbell was acting in what he thought the most delicate and judicious manner; he guessed Lady Caroline would not object to lean on George,—scarcely more than a boy—and the son of her father's old friend; and he himself was thereby enabled to act as squire to the Miss Boltons, who, if he had left them to the polite attentions of their brother, would probably have concluded their walk unsupported. So he said, when he saw Lady Caroline very comfortable, as he thought :—

“Now I will take the Miss Boltons, if they will honour me.”

Lucy hung back, frightened.

“Do, Miss Lucy,” said he kindly, “you must be tired, too.”

She laid her fingers timidly on his right arm, Sarah took the other, and in this order they all made their appearance on the avenue of Northwood Abbey. Lord Fitzarthur was standing on the steps, watching for them. A gleam of satisfaction came over his face when he saw his sister was leaning on George, and not on Campbell. He ran to meet them.

“I am most happy to see the son and daughter of the two old friends on such pleasant terms with one another;” and he smiled very benignly on both.

George was delighted; Lord Fitzarthur had never been so gracious to him before; it is hard to tell what he augured from that speech. If people would consider it, there is nothing so unjust, and yet nothing so common, as to excite hopes and emotions in the breast of one person, either for the purpose of subduing and crushing them in that of another, or because we are elated that things are not so bad as we expected. If Fitzarthur had known how little idea Campbell had of his sister, he would have been supremely indifferent which she was leaning on, the arm of Mr Bolton's son or the dispensary doctor.

After dinner, Caroline kindly showed Lucy everything she thought would amuse her and make her quite forget the scene in the wood; and when tea was over, the coach was in attendance to take home the Boltons, and Campbell returned on horseback to Cypress Cottage.

CHAPTER II.

THE DOCTOR AND THE INDIAN.

"She stood a moment as the Pythoness
Stands on her tripos, agonized, and full
Of inspiration gather'd from distress,
When all the heart-strings, like wild horses, pull
The heart asunder."—BYRON.

"Lo, how hollow the fiend speaks within him!"—SHAKESPEARE.

AT his breakfast the next morning, Dr Campbell consulted with himself (the poor fellow never had any one else to consult with) how he should spend the day, in order to avoid a visit from Mr Davenport, and an importunate request to go and dine with him, and meet Mr Warner. So he settled that as soon as he gave some directions to Edmund Bolton about his day's employment, he would ride off and visit the Routledges first, and then the Nevilles, and that he would stay and dine with whichever family might happen to give him an invitation. So having left Edmund and the skeleton in close communion, he proceeded to Holly Park, and being told that both ladies and gentlemen were out, he went on to Sunville, where he found not only all the Nevilles in the drawing-room, but Mrs Routledge and her two daughters also paying a morning visit. He made himself very agreeable, walked for an hour about the grounds with the four young ladies, and after handing the Routledges into their carriage, instead of setting off in hot haste to keep an appointment with some importunate patient, which Miss Neville had made up her mind that he was to do,—he walked quietly back to the drawing-room and began to read a book:—there was no danger that old Warner would bolt in here, or Davenport assail him with unwelcome hospitality.

Miss Neville's heart bounded within her when she saw him making himself at home; she immediately asked him to stay and dine, to the displeasure of Maria, who commenced a studied apology for her sister's rather thoughtless request;—she was sure Alicia was forgetting they had no gentlemen to sit with him after

dinner ; it was really unfair to tax him with such an evening as he was likely to spend ;—alone with four ladies ! But he stopped her by saying, that nothing would give him greater pleasure ;—and so we shall now leave Miss Neville in the seventh heaven (it is a comfort to be able to leave any one happy, for ever so short a time), with Dr Campbell reading out *Childe Harold* to her, in his unrivalled voice and manner.

Poor Lady Caroline in the mean time had returned to her usual solitude, and subsided into her usual despondency. She spent the forenoon alone in her cottage ; Fitzarthur was gone four miles off to look at a horse—a famous hunter, he heard. It is a great relief to ladies that gentlemen must go now and then “to look at a horse,” when they are inclined to give them more of their society than is quite agreeable. She was rejoiced to be alone this morning ; she wished to brood over the events of the day before, uninterrupted by books and conversation for which she had no *goût*. If Fitzarthur was with her she could not discuss yesterday’s walk, for the key-note of her strain should be hushed ; she must avoid speaking of Dr Campbell. So the presence of her brother was becoming oppressive to her ; that brother whom she had loved so fondly,—her companion from infancy,—the last scion with herself of their long and proud line. Out upon Love ! plunging, hacking, hewing through strong solid old affections, to build on their ruins a glittering fabric of his own that one ungenial breath may scatter to the four points, leaving it very doubtful whether the former precious edifice can ever be rebuilt on the same conditions as before.

The more she thought upon what had transpired yesterday respecting Miss Purdon’s death, the more her curiosity was excited to learn something further about that young lady. She had noticed that Sarah’s manner was constrained and mysterious in telling her the little she did. Was Dr Campbell blamed for her death ? or had he been attached to her,—and was he so blighted and prostrated by her sudden loss, and under his own care too, that he had no heart for a new engagement—was incapable of feeling a second love ?

This suspicion made her miserable ; she racked her brain to find out some one to whom she might apply for further information ; for as to Sarah, she felt it would be useless to put any more searching questions to her, and with whom else of her acquaint-

ances was she on such familiar terms as to attempt to interrogate them on a subject so delicate? Chance facilitated matters for her far sooner than she could have ventured to hope.

That night, when Elpsley was assisting her to undress, the waiting-maid began to complain of Sabina, the Swiss girl;—she was grown idle, saucy, unmanageable, and far too fond of the head-gardener's company.

"I am convinced of it!" cried Lady Caroline. "I must get rid of her; but it is so hard to meet with people in this country who want such a person. I suppose Gordon has not heard of any one yet. I know she is grown quite too much for me, and every one must allow I do all in my power for her, and still she continues to elude me. On Sunday last I took her to church on the seat behind the carriage with the footman, and I thought she was coming in directly after me, but she never made her appearance until the end of the first lesson! and I quite forgot when we came home to ask her where on earth she vanished to.

"Oh, my Lady, I think I know what became of her. I heard her telling the coachman that day at dinner that she had seen Miss Purdon's grave at last, but that she was a long time before she could find it; so I suppose she went in search of it instead of following your Ladyship into church."

"And why was she so anxious to see Miss Purdon's grave?"

"Why, my Lady, people talk a great deal about her death,—'tis a good while ago, but when strangers like our servants come to the country, and ask—Has his reverence no family?—they shake their heads and say he had a fine lassie, and it was hard he should lose her in such a manner."

"And what manner do they say he lost her in?" asked Lady Caroline, anxiously.

"Why, my Lady, you've heard, I suppose, of that old nurse, Mrs Ford, who lives in the pretty cottage on the hill opposite to the church hill?"

"Yes, I have."

"Well, she went there, say of a Monday, in perfect health, and found the old woman very ill, as the story goes, and stayed all night to nurse her, and would not go home till her father went on Tuesday afternoon and compelled her to come away; and as soon as she got home she took to her bed, and died at twelve at night—of a cold, they say, that she got sitting up all night,—but nobody knows what ailed her. Dr Campbell attended her."

"I know, I know ; and does not any one say for certain what she died of ?"

"They could find out nothing, my Lady, for the doctor drove every servant out of the room, and sent off for that old woman, who, bad as she was, it seems was able to go ; and the two attended her till she was no more, and would let no one else in to her. The people say it was a great shame there was no inquest, but the doctor settled everything ; indeed, 'tis reported he and the old woman told no end of lies to her father about her."

"You had better take care what language you use, Elpsley," cried Lady Caroline, indignantly ; "how dare you say coolly that Dr Campbell told a number of lies to Mr Purdon ? How can you presume to take away a gentleman's character in that manner ?"

"My Lady, I humbly beg your pardon. I don't say such a thing myself ; I was telling your Ladyship the reports that were going ; of course I don't believe them ; he seems a most honourable gentleman, and must be calumniated ; and he was nearly killed by it himself,—he looked like death for a year after it happened. Shall I put on your Ladyship's night-wrapper ?"

"Wait a moment. Does Mrs Ford herself ever speak of Miss Purdon ?"

"Not that I know, my Lady ; but she encourages the report that it was by sitting up with her that the young lady came by her death ; and at any rate they say she is broken-hearted by the business altogether."

"Is she bed-ridden ?"

"Oh, no, my lady ; and as far as money matters go, she is very comfortable ; Mr Purdon gives her a pension, and she sits in her little parlour, and all the young ladies visit her and read to her ; Miss Bolton attends her."

Caroline, having dismissed the waiting-maid, settled that she would endeavour to find out some excuse for visiting Mrs Ford too, in order to glean, if possible, something more satisfactory about this mysterious affair.

The next day her father informed her that he and Lord Fitz-arthur were going to some distance on business, and as they were not to be home till rather late, she might dine whenever she pleased. She considered this a most fortunate incident ; she would dine at two, and take a quiet walk to Mrs Ford's cottage in the cool of the day, and be home in the evening before the re-

turn of the gentlemen. She considered she could give a very good reason to the old lady for doing her this unexpected honour. She would take with her a written description of Sabina's various qualifications, and request Mrs Ford to inquire among the ladies who called on her whether any of them required a servant of that kind. Finally, to render her visit completely acceptable, she ordered a basket to be packed with wine, fowl, and pastry, as a treat for the old woman.

About three o'clock she commenced her walk, attended by a little boy carrying the basket. She never had set her foot on the road before without a gentleman; a week ago she would not have believed any one who had told her she would do such a thing, but now, so intense was her desire to find out whether any mysterious connection had subsisted between Dr Campbell and Miss Purdon,—aught that might deaden any inclination in him to form other ties,—that she would have despised a much greater objection than the chance of lowering her dignity by wandering along the highway unattended. Her loneliness was what affected her most, but she recollected that Sarah Bolton walked out constantly without any companion, and was never molested in the slightest degree. So she gave no orders to any person to come for her; indeed she did not exactly wish the domestics to know whither she was going; Elpsley might laugh at her, or suspect something, on learning that she had posted off to Mrs Ford directly after hearing the facts she had communicated to her.

Having arrived at the cottage-door, she ordered the boy to lay down the basket, and paid him liberally, telling him at the same time, that if he tattled to any one about where he had been, she would never employ him again. She knocked as timidly as if she was a houseless girl coming to solicit alms or shelter, instead of an Earl's daughter bearing a handsome present. The door was opened by Nannie Ford herself, and, seeing a simply attired young woman (for Lady Caroline had carefully avoided everything rich or showy on this occasion), with a large basket on the step beside her, she thought her a traveller who wished to rest a little, or desired a glass of water, so she said, quietly :—

“ Well, dear ? ”

Lady Caroline answered :—

“ I am Lord Northwood's daughter, not a distant neighbour of yours. I have heard a good deal of you from Miss Bolton, and I wish to visit you as she does; so I have come and

brought you some wine, and a few other little offerings, in this basket."

The poor woman's countenance and manner underwent a total transformation.

"Oh, your Ladyship! what an honour! Will you ever excuse my stupidity? My sight is bad, and I never heard the carriage, is there no one attending your Ladyship?" and she looked up and down the road.

"I like a nice walk in the afternoon," said Caroline, "so I came on foot, and a boy brought the basket; come, take it in, and I will follow."

Nannie carried it into the parlour, then hastily drew an arm-chair and placed a screen behind it, as if there could be any wind from the door in July, and begged of her Ladyship to sit down and rest.

"What a sweet little cottage you have!" said Caroline, "and such pretty flowers too! I can add very little to your enjoyments in that way." And she handed her a splendid bouquet, that she had culled herself in the garden and greenhouse.

"Oh, my Lady, you are too good! what a love of a nose-gay! This will be something to surprise my lady-visitor next Monday."

"Come, then, while you are putting the flowers in water, we will chat. Does a lady visit you every week?"

"Yes, my Lady; sometimes one, and sometimes another; my darling Miss Bolton is my favourite; is not she a friend of your Ladyship?"

"Yes; I am very fond of her."

"Ah, she is a kind, sensible, feeling young woman; and she reads and explains so nicely to me."

"And does any one besides the ladies visit you?"

"Yes, my Lady; the doctor who attended your Ladyship is very attentive and kind to me,—oh! I am afraid this little room is too hot for your Ladyship; shall I open the window?"

"Perhaps you had better," said Caroline, turning away her head; "does Mr Purdon call often? You are his parishioner, I know."

"Yes, I am his parishioner, my Lady; and, besides, I was nurse in the family for many a year; and my daughter, who is dead,

wet-nursed his child ; and he is *so* good to me ! oh, *so* good ! I owe him all I have ; this house, and many a comfort besides."

Caroline was come to the point she so much desired.

"The child your daughter nursed was, I suppose, the young lady who died so suddenly," said she.

"Yes, dear ; he had no other ;—oh, pardon me, my Lady ! I had the presumption to say 'dear' to you ! I'm so forgetful now ;—that's what I say to good Miss Bolton."

"Oh, do say 'dear' to me !" cried Caroline ; "you can't think how sweet it sounds. I never hear a woman say a loving word to me ; my mamma is dead, and my nurse is dead, and I am sad and lonely enough sometimes, Mrs Ford."

"God comfort us all, my darling lady ! there is sure to be some drawback in every situation. I think I should be very happy now if I had my poor child with me, instead of struggling on here by myself. Still—she is at rest ; her life was not very happy ; her husband was rough and cross enough sometimes ;—his name is Higgin, he farms a few acres on the Miss Nevilles' estate."

Caroline did not want to know his name, nor where he lived ; she little dreamt of the part he was to play in her destiny. At present she hastened to cut short the old woman's garrulity by a very home question.

"Mr Purdon seems to have suffered a loss similar to yours, but the death of his only child was dreadfully sudden, was it not ? What did she die of ?"

Nannie started, and was silent for a moment ; she then said, slowly :—

"Honoured lady, she died by the visitation of God."

"We all die by the will of God, of course," said Caroline, "but there are what the learned call secondary causes, and I thought you might have known what the complaint was ; perhaps it was some very unusual one."

"Indeed, my Lady, if you were to ask the doctor himself who attended her, he would tell you nothing more than that it was something—brought on by a cold."

"Why should I ask him ?" said Caroline, looking confused ; "but, as we sat here together, I thought I would just talk to you about her ;—I take such interest in Poor Mr Purdon."

Nannie fancied her Ladyship looked dissatisfied, and suppos-

ing she had heard the usual report, and was vexed with her for endeavouring to evade any reference to it, she said at once :—

“ You have probably heard, my Lady, that I am blamed for the illness that caused her death ;—that she got cold sitting up with me ;—yes, the world blames me, and I bear it ;—I know I must ; but, at any rate, no misconduct, no selfishness has ever been laid at my door ; I never wished her to come to me, and—Heaven knows—I was frightfully uncomfortable during the time she stayed. While they say I am the cause, they allow I am the innocent one, and that is some comfort to me ; we can endure anything better than the consciousness of having committed sin.”

“ Very true,” said Caroline, and she was commencing some words of sympathy, but Nannie interrupted her.

“ Pardon me, my Lady, but my poor case is not worthy of so much attention, when you consider the blow that fell upon her saintly father, and that fine warm-hearted young man—”

“ What young man ? ” cried Caroline, hysterically, and not able to check herself.

Nannie looked surprised.

“ I mean Mr Livingstone, my dear.”

“ Mr Livingstone ! who is he ? ”

“ Oh ! I thought your Ladyship had heard ; he was her cousin,—sister’s son to Mr Purdon, and she was engaged to be married to him from the time they were children.”

A weight was lifted off Caroline’s heart ; she could scarcely suppress her delight.

“ Oh my dear Mrs Ford ! I never heard that before.” Then, calming herself, and assuming a look of concern :—

“ Really that makes it ten times as melancholy, for I suppose he is broken-hearted also.”

“ He is beyond suffering, my Lady ; he never returned here after her death, but died himself abroad some time ago.”

“ How sad ! and were they greatly attached ? ”

“ Why there was much more love on his side than on hers ; for she was but young when they parted, and he went to India, and she to school ; she looked on him much as a brother ; but he had a deep, wild love for her, I never saw the like of it, from the time he was a little boy ; and his uncle was always telling him she was to be his wife, and sure enough he never forgot it.”

“ And was she very pretty ? ”

"Yes, my Lady, prettier than a fairy ; and such wild, laughing, shining eyes, they always looked as if they had been just created, fresh from God's hand, and not yet darkened by a tear ; you'd think the hardest use they had been ever put to was to look at a rainbow ;—ah ! I'm a poor attempt at describing, my Lady."

"Indeed you have given me an excellent idea of her eyes ;—and her other features ?"

"Oh, her mouth was rich, and full, and moist, like red currants, and dented about with dimples, and her cheeks were round and soft,—and such a bright red ! and her hair tumbling all about them in loose long locks. And her neck, and arms, and all her flesh were so smooth and firm, and plump and cool. She was small, but beautifully proportioned—a little model, you'd say ;—but I'm only spoiling her trying to describe her ; how could I give your Ladyship the expression of her face ?—and I loved her so ! When my daughter had to go home sick, I took her place, and attended the dear child from the time she was a year old until she went to school. She was wilder than a squirrel, and could climb just like one. I kept her out in the air all day, and it made her so strong and healthy, she looked like a ripe cherry. Master Julius resided at the Rectory then, and went to a day-school at Northwood every morning. Then after breakfast I went with Miss Annie to the Hill of Cones (you can look down into it from the opposite side of the road, my Lady), and I took her luncheon in a basket, and she bounded about among the trees, and caught butterflies for her museum ; and I did a bit of needle-work under the shade, until the time arrived for Master Julius to be coming from school, and then we began to watch for him until he came in sight, moving slowly on the road below us, and his eyes fixed on the side of the hill where he expected we would be ; and when he saw us, or her, I should say, he would dash himself off the pony and let it go loose wherever it chose, and skipping across the stepping-stones and up the side of the hill he was soon by her side kissing her, and saying, 'What shall I do for you ?' and she would say—'Bring me down that branch up there,' pointing to the very highest branch on the top of the tallest tree. 'To be sure I will,' he'd say, pulling off his jacket ;—but, my Lady, I declare to you, while he was preparing to go up, she would have the tree half climbed herself, and when he reached the top, there she'd be before him with the branch plucked off, waving it and flapping it in his face, and laughing, just like a shower of music ;

then they'd sit together there half-way up to the skies, chirping and calling to one another just like birds. And there was I below, a poor terrified creature, beseeching of them to come down, but then they'd laugh twice as much and pelt me with cones. I was obliged to tell the dear gentleman that I must give up the management of them, but he only said :—' Let them be, Nannie, let them be: if God did not watch over His little flock, there would be scores of children killed every day.' He was that easy, trusting kind of man :—too easy, he was not fit to manage that little girl; and she came from France, prettier and wilder than ever, but not half so innocent; with such queer notions—and so flirty, and no one to check her."

"And did she wish to marry her cousin when she returned?" asked Caroline.

"I'm not sure she did, but—"

"Perhaps she saw some one else subsequently that she liked better," interrupted Caroline, anxiously.

"I was not going to say that, my Lady," answered Nannie nervously, "but that, however she felt, she was not prepared to disobey her papa in that respect, for he had his heart set on it, and quiet as he was, she was afraid of him when Mr Julius was in question, so they would have been surely married only she was otherwise provided for: it seems a hard lot, but she might have had a harder if she had lived. Mr Julius loved and hated with equal violence, and he was very jealous; and if she had gone on flirting or *cocketing* with other young men after her marriage,—I shudder when I think what might have been the consequence to herself and them both. I would not have the assurance to call in question the wisdom of my betters; but, my Lady, it seems a bad plan to engage children to one another without knowing whether they will both be agreeable to it when they are big."

"I quite agree with you," said Caroline; "the affections should not be dictated to, nor controlled either, if people have their hearts set on one another."

"Just so," said Nannie; then as if thinking aloud, "she might be alive now if she had been let alone to choose for herself."

"Eh! what's the meaning of that?" cried Caroline.

Nannie started.

"Oh! my Lady, I beg your pardon; what I meant was to tell you an anecdote of Master Julius. Don't mind what I said last—"

pray don't. As I was saying, 'tis a great doubt what kind of husband he would have made, he was awfully vindictive, and not in the common way either.

"One day Master Chester, a young gentleman who lived near us, was playing with him in the garden, and in the course of the play said something very insulting to him ; so I was going to run off for the gardener to separate them in time, before Master Julius should, as I thought, kick the other to death ; but instead of that he looked at him very steadily for a minute with his grand, dark blue eyes ; but there was an expression in them I shall never forget ; then he took off his cap and bowed to him, saying—what's this, he said ?—two French words—I'm sure I thought I should remember them and the look for ever—the look kept the words in my mind though I did not understand them ;—oh yes : he said ' *Au revoir*,' and walked into the house. So I said, ' Heaven be praised, Master Julius is learning to curb his temper ! ' and Master Chester said, ' Old goose ! Livingstone is a coward.' One of us was as right as the other.

"Now there was going to be a splendid fête at the house of a neighbouring squire in honour of his son's coming of age ; every one had been looking forward to it for months ; there were to be tents on the lawn, and a military band, and great dancing, and splendid fireworks. The Chester family were to be there of course, and my master and his nephew ; Miss Anne was too young to go. Well, the day before the fête Master Julius walked off to Chestertown without telling any one, and sent in for Master Chester, and when he got him on the lawn he gave him a most dreadful beating and left him senseless on the grass, without any appearance of an eye in his head. Home he came, and walked up to the nursery, and there was not so much as a drop of perspiration on his forehead. ' Nannie,' said he, ' Chester won't be at the fête to-morrow ; I've done for him. He'll be in bed and the surgeon stuping him. Now wasn't it better to wait till the right time ? If I had drubbed him the day he called me the name, he'd be well by this time, and as gay as a parrot at the entertainment to-morrow. There is nothing like thought and coolness.' ' The coolness of Satan, sir,' said I. Then came a note from Mr Chester to Mr Purdon complaining that his nephew had half-killed his son, and so master told Master Julius that he should stay at home and not go to the fête, and he said nothing until his uncle had left the

room, and then he began to laugh, saying :—‘ Nannie, he thinks I am greatly grieved at being kept at home, as if any fête on earth could give me a tenth of the joy I feel at seeing my vengeance so complete, so telling, so artistic : ’—was not that last an odd word for a boy of thirteen ? ”

“ Yes, indeed,” said Caroline ! “ other boys would have said ‘ jolly.’ ”

“ Oh, he never used ‘ jolly,’ nor ‘ stunning,’ nor any other vulgar boys’ words. He was always reading high-flown books, and he used to study every religion more than his own—God forgive him !—he said his own was not sublime, and that he would ‘ turn Turk,’ or something else that I forget the name of.”

“ I doubt his uncle flogged him enough,” observed Caroline.

“ Oh ! my Lady,” answered she, shaking her head, “ *he* could never be beaten—once he was, and the doctor had to be sent for, and there was fine work, and the doctor told master that he must be flogged no more, for if he was, he would either die in convulsions, or stab whoever beat him. But any punishment that he did not look on as a degradation he bore like a lamb. But if ever he found out he was any way wronged—oh good God ! I thank thee that he is in his grave.”

“ Upon my word, I don’t agree with you,” cried Caroline, with animation ; “ it would be a great comfort to poor Mr Purdon to have even him left ; he was not wicked to people he loved ; certainly his uncle would be happier if he had him ; after having been the cause (unintentional, I know) of the daughter’s death—why are you thankful that he has lost the nephew too ? ”

Her words sounded harsh, but she was provoked with Nannie for her observation, or rather her avowed gratitude on the death of young Livingstone. On hearing these words from the lips of Lady Caroline, Nannie turned exceedingly white and continued mute for a few minutes. Then, as if she had made up her mind about something, she rose slowly from her seat, drew herself up to her full height, laid one arm on the chimney-piece, and held the other aloft to give emphasis to her words. She spoke in the measured and hollow tone of the Pythoness.

“ Long have I suffered, much have I borne, and I will endure to the end without betraying those who trusted me. I accuse no one, I reveal no secret, I but perform a duty I have many years owed to myself. Lady Caroline Fitzarthur ! it was NOT in attending upon me that Miss Purdon spent her last night on earth.

Nor nurse nor physician performed any office for *me* that night ; I needed none, I was well ; better than I shall ever be again for the remainder of my life."

She sank down on a chair, put her hand to her heart, and seemed to breathe with much difficulty.

Lady Caroline was thunderstruck at her words and terrified by the ghastly hue of her cheek, but before she could offer her any assistance, the outer door of the house was rudely opened, and the next instant the parlour door flew back, and a countryman rushed in and threw him self on the first chair he met, which happened to be directly behind the screen that Nannie had placed at the back of Lady Caroline's seat, and accordingly her person was quite concealed from his view.

"Mother," he cried, not regarding the pallid looks and fainting condition of Mrs Ford,—“mother, 'tis, as usual, the very opposite of what we expected ; he has refused to say a single word in my favour, and Miss Neville won't give the situation to any one that does not bring a recommendation from some gentleman she knows ; and Lee is sure to get it, for Mr James has written a most handsome letter for him, and will speak for him besides when he dines at Sunville to-morrow, and now 'tis too late for me to do anything more, but if I had known in time that *he* would have refused, I could have applied to another gentleman who would have written for me in a minute, but I'd sooner have had a character from *him*—she'd take his man before a hundred others ; for the truth is, mother, she loves the ground he treads on, and all the people say she is going to marry him ; the servants will have it's certain : yesterday he spent the whole day at Sunville, and they were walking, and talking, and planning together, and he showed her a sheltered bank that he said would do nicely for a grass garden for autumn flowers, and there were two men set to work to make it to-day. I don't grudge him his luck, if it does turn out luck, but it would not be much trouble to him to do that good turn for me ; he is beginning to take me very easy of late, just as if he was safer now than he was the first night : —I know if there is any mischief brewing for him, damn me if I'll throw down a spade to go and help him."

He paused. Lady Caroline had been listening to the whole harangue motionless in her chair ; his violent manner and loud voice had stunned her at first, and then some suspicions that arose in her mind respecting the person who had not been named made

her continue deeply silent and attentive until he stopped, when she could no longer bear her suspense, but starting from her seat she stood erect before him, crying :—

“Tell me, I entreat of you, what is the name of the gentleman who has, as you think, treated you ill?”

Higgin shrank back aghast, as if the White Lady of Avenel had suddenly walked out of the wall. He could only stammer :—

“Madam! madam!”

But Mrs Ford had now pretty well recovered herself, and said to him in bitter vexation :—

“Thomas! how can you make this noise and row, and here is Lady Caroline Fitzarthur, who has done me the honour of coming to see me, and you insult and agitate her with your miserable affairs? I’m sure, my Lady, I’m ready to die with shame,”

“Hush, hush!” said Caroline; “you know he did not see me, and therefore is not to be blamed. Tell me, my good man, of whom were you speaking?”

He looked confounded, for he had often heard Dr Campbell was a great favourite at the Abbey.

“My Lady!—I beg your pardon most humbly;—such an honour—what I never could have expected,—and that screen—” was all he could get out.

“Answer her Ladyship directly the question she has condescended to ask you,” said Nannie, sternly, to her son-in-law.

He spoke, looking on the ground like a culprit.

“The doctor, my Lady, that lives in Northwood; indeed he has been always a very kind friend to me, so I was a little surprised at his refusing to ask Miss Neville to appoint me her gamekeeper, but I dare say he has good reasons for not wishing to do it,—only just in my disappointment I spoke angrily—” and so he went on, unheeded by her; little she cared whether he refused, and what were his reasons; one dull sound rang in her ears like a knell.

“She loves the ground he treads on”—“They were walking, and talking, and consulting together”—yes, like engaged persons; making their little arrangements about their joint property. She trembled exceedingly, and dropped into her chair.

Higgin, finding she had stopped questioning him, was glad to make his escape to the kitchen, which was opposite to the parlour. Lady Caroline sat motionless and speechless for some time. Miss Purdon—Nannie’s last remarkable words just before Higgin

burst in—the approaching darkness—everything was forgotten in the horrible all-engrossing idea that he was going to be married to Miss Neville!

Mrs Ford perceived at length that there was something very particular the matter with her, and she said, with great anxiety :—

“My Lady, I am greatly afraid that outlandish man has frightened you sadly! Dear, dear! how unfortunate I am that such a thing should happen just the day you honoured me—”

“No, no; he has not frightened me at all; I’m half tired; pray give me a glass of water.”

Nannie entreated of her to take some wine in preference, and she consented, feeling that she would otherwise have scarcely strength to walk home. When she had finished it she looked out of the window.

“Oh dear, Mrs Ford! it is almost dark; what shall I do?”

“Don’t you expect the carriage, my Lady?” asked Nannie, surprised.

“No, no; I said nothing about it; I intended to walk back by daylight; I hate driving; but it is too dark to go alone now; I don’t know what to do.”

“My dear Lady, I will send Thomas Higgin off to the Abbey immediately for the carriage, and it will soon be here.”

“Oh, no,” she cried, more anxious than ever to get home before her father and brother, and conceal her misery in bed; “I could not bear to make such a rout; let me see,—I must walk;—I suppose your son-in-law is trustworthy?”

“Oh, true as steel, my Lady! though forbidding at first; not polished like your own servants, but, I’d say, safer. He would die to defend your Ladyship if required,—but is it possible you would rather walk home with him than order the carriage?”

“I assure you I would; say no more of the carriage, call him; no, wait; I was forgetting;” and she then mentioned her desire to get Sabina a place, and, giving Mrs Ford the written description of the girl, she requested of her to inquire among her lady visitors whether any of them would wish for her. The more miserable she was, the more desirous she became to get the charge of this impetuous young foreigner off her hands.

Nannie promised to do her best, and added that she had heard Higgin mentioning that the Miss Nevilles were looking out for a foreign waiting-maid.

The name made her shudder; but she thanked Mrs Ford,

and desired Higgin to be summoned, who forthwith arrived, full of gratitude for the honour done him, and so forth. Lady Caroline took a kind leave of Nannie, and departed, under these to her most singular circumstances. It was now pretty dark, but the evening was very beautiful, and a soft perfume of many trees rose from the Hill of Cones that stretched down into the valley on their left. On the gentle hill at the other side of the glen, the church and churchyard were dimly visible, where the wild and wayward young beauty had so early found the goal of her joyous career. Caroline thought—Oh, that she herself were there too! What had she to live for? Every day her life was growing more insufferable, her lot assuming a darker hue.

But would she wish to die, and leave Campbell in the arms of Miss Neville? Horrible thought! She prayed that the sigh that rent her heart might break his too, and that they might both lie down to rest together by the side of the rector's child. Higgin walked behind her, at a respectful distance. She looked back and called to him:

"If you do not keep close to me, any one I may meet will think I am alone."

He came near, with zealous alacrity, eager to do whatever she pronounced most desirable.

"I understand the Miss Nevilles are looking out for a Swiss waiting-maid."

"Yes, my Lady; the housekeeper told me so."

"I have one who will, I think, answer for them, and if you will negotiate I shall feel obliged. Mrs Ford will give you every information, and you can communicate with the housekeeper."

"I shall be proud to do so, my Lady."

After a pause, she said with a desperate attempt at a careless manner, while her voice sounded strangely hoarse and unnatural:—

"Which of the Miss Nevilles is going to be married?"

"Your Ladyship! I don't know that either of them is."

She stammered out:—

"But I heard,—you said something to your mother,—perhaps—"

"My Lady! I will never forgive myself for the way I went on in your noble presence! I was in a passion;—I expect I took

things by the wrong end ; now I'm all right, and I don't believe everything servants say ; I know I talked of some report—but they're always reporting ;—I'm sure neither of the young ladies is going to be married in this country."

She saw there would be no use in cross-examining him, for that he was determined to unsay every syllable he had said when unconscious that he had any listener but Mrs Ford. Besides, her high feelings conquered her anxiety to extract further information on a point where the little she had learned was obtained entirely against his wish, and stealthily as it were on her part. And yet it was marvellous the pleasure his last words gave her, though she must have felt they did not proceed from his heart. Ay ; she was already beginning to bid the hideous phantom away from her as a lying and impertinent intruder, the rude disturber of her silken dreams ; and, contrary to the suggestions of reason and common sense, she inclined rather to believe what he said studiously and advisedly for her especial ear, than what he had let fall in the full flow of domestic confidence. After all, she thought, it was not likely he was going to be married without Miss Bolton or any one in the neighbourhood hearing of it ; Sarah would have been one of the first to find it out through her brother Edmund ; oh yes, precisely ; Dr Campbell told his pupil everything, and he would tell his sister, and she was just the person who would give her (Caroline) notice of it, as a little caution,—for she was glad to lay hold of this straw now, and admit to herself what she had proudly rejected before—that Sarah had discovered the state of her heart. Besides, if he was in love with Miss Neville it was not likely that he would be so perfectly happy in the company of Mrs Davenport, and so engrossed with her and her children ;—thus flying for relief and comfort to the woman who, in consequence of Campbell's devotion to her, had been previously a cause of jealousy and wrath.

During these reflections she suddenly, in the dusk, nearly struck against a man, who, not looking before him either, was coming in the opposite direction. Both started back, and she made a faint exclamation, for the person was no other than Campbell himself.

"Lady Caroline Fitzarthur !" he exclaimed ; "can I believe it ? For heaven's sake why are you walking on the road at this time

of night, and who is this?—Higgin!" looking at her attendant.

She told him, as clearly as her agitation would permit, what led to his finding her in this situation.

"Excuse my interference," said he, "but I think it was very injudicious of you to object to Higgin's going for the carriage; what in the world do you think your father will say?"

"Oh, he is gone on a distant excursion, and I may be home before him."

"Don't flatter yourself; I went this afternoon to vaccinate the child of a farmer who lives a little beyond the Abbey, and when I was passing your gate your father and brother were riding in; I spoke a few words to them."

"Oh, what shall I do?" she cried; "papa is frightened to death, and will be so angry."

"The only remedy now," said he, "is to hasten home as fast as possible; you have but about a quarter of a mile to go;—permit me to attend you; it is most improper that you should be out at such an hour with only this man."

He said these words in a low voice, and then turned to Higgin:—

"You may go back to Mrs Ford's cottage, and I will undertake to leave Lady Caroline safe at the Abbey."

The man made no answer, but stood doggedly, waiting to hear what her Ladyship's pleasure might be. She thanked him very affably and told him she would spare him any further trouble. He bowed and departed.

Campbell gave Lady Caroline his arm, and they proceeded. She was trembling violently.

"Don't be so frightened," said he, kindly; "your father is not very implacable."

"I think more of my brother," said she.

"I trust we shall be able to appease him, too," returned Campbell.

But it was neither the dread of her father's displeasure, nor of her brother's wrath, that was disturbing her; the sole thought that shook her was,—on whose arm was she now resting? Was it on that of Miss Neville's betrothed, or on an arm that might yet be hers for ever, to defend, to support, to encircle her? At one moment she clung to his side trustingly, lovingly, adoringly;—at the next instant she felt impelled to fling him away,

and bid him not mock her with his politeness, not insult her with his frigid encouragement, not be her guide and protector to-night, and to-morrow be less than an old acquaintance.

He, on his part, felt annoyed at her having commenced visiting Mrs Ford, and was determined to put a stop to it.

"What could have made it come into your head to go to see that old woman?" he asked.

"I hear all the ladies about visit her, and I wish to be like other people, and do as much good as I can," she answered.

"Oh! those ladies form a knot called 'district visitors,' and it is their duty accordingly to call at the cottages of the lower orders; but you do not belong to their clique."

"No, but I think I am bound to be charitable to the poor, though I am not a member of a society."

"I assure you Mrs Ford is not an object of charity; she is most comfortably provided for. I could point out many poor creatures near your own gate who need your generosity much more than she does."

"I will attend to any recommendation of yours with the greatest pleasure," she rejoined, "but Mrs Ford is very lonely; there is charity in comforting words, where alms are unnecessary."

Campbell frowned.

"She is a great talker, and talking is not good for her either; she has a heart complaint, and you are too nervous to be alone with her; she may die very suddenly; you had better not go there any more; you see how she has kept you this evening, and brought you into an exceedingly disagreeable predicament, I must say."

"Indeed it was my own fault; but if you think it altogether better that I should cease visiting her, I will."

He was going to say something, when, the moon having risen, he was startled by seeing the Indian at a distance advancing to meet them. Suddenly he made a dead pause and eyed them both; then putting himself in motion again he darted rapidly forward, and, stopping short once more when he came within a yard of their faces, he planted himself firmly opposite to them, and seemed disposed to impede their further progress. Campbell moved a little to the left in order to pass him by, but he moved instantly in the same direction, and still stood right in their way.

"This is strange conduct, sir," said Campbell, "please let us pass."

"What! another!" exclaimed the Indian, looking from Campbell to Lady Caroline; "what! another!"

"I believe he is not in his senses," whispered Caroline, terrified; "what shall we do?"

"Mad or not mad," cried he, "he shall not block up the road in this insolent manner! Go out of the way immediately, sir!" and he lifted up his cane.

"I would advise you not to strike me," said the Indian, with a look that might well have been borrowed from the cobra de capella.

It seemed to have a powerful effect on Campbell, for he dropped his cane and stood still for a moment, with his eyes fixed on his adversary, who, in his turn, looked steadily at him, and so, for a few seconds, they remained silent and face to face. The Indian was the first to speak: he said contemptuously to Campbell:—

"Depart whithersoever you please, for the present, but let go this unfortunate young woman directly. Come, lady, with me, and I will conduct you safe to your father's house."

"Oh, no!" she cried, "why should I leave him? I cannot have a safer protector than he is. I don't doubt your honour, sir" (for she was greatly afraid of him), "but why should I thus offend this gentleman, who has kindly undertaken to see me home?"

"Yes; and no doubt he will bring his undertakings to a glorious issue," sneered the Indian. Then to Campbell; "Unhand that lady instantly, villain!" and he endeavoured to wrest Lady Caroline from her companion's arm. She screamed. "Why do you fear me?" he said to her upbraidingly: "I offer you safety; I see that man as you cannot see him; I know him as you know him not. You see there a beautiful human being, but I behold Siva, with the lion's skin round his loins; Siva, with the deadly serpent looking over his shoulder; Siva, with his collar of bones, and ONE SKULL hanging about his neck for a locket."

Campbell turned as pale as ashes.

"By heaven," he said, almost choking, "if you do not desist instantaneously from your raving jargon, and let us pass on, I will strike you dead."

And he endeavoured to force his way on, dragging Lady Caroline with him, while she said, in the most imploring manner, to the Indian, who was still grasping her hand:—

"I beseech you, sir, delay me no longer : I am sure you mean well, but I am perfectly safe with this gentleman ; perhaps you do not know who he is,—I would go with him to prison and to death ! "

"And to dishonour ! " said the Indian, slowly ; " yes ; such are women. Heaven help you ! " He gave a deep sigh.

"You know not what you are saying ! " she shrieked ; but Campbell said :—

"Hush ! Lady Caroline, leave him to me ; " then to the Indian, " You shall answer to me another time for this language, at present—drop this lady's hand ; " and with a sudden jerk he freed her and was hurrying on, when the Indian, after fumbling in his bosom for an instant, made a sudden and rapid descent on Campbell, exclaiming,—

"I have a message from God unto thee ! "

Campbell, with an instinctive sense of danger, bounded back a few steps, disengaging himself from Lady Caroline by the movement. She was immediately grasped by the Indian.

"Come with me ! Where do you wish to go ? If you cannot walk I will carry you."

But before she could answer, or Campbell attempt to rescue her, a man sprang over a stile that was at the side of the road, and rushing into the midst of them cried :—

"Good God, Caroline ! "

"Oh, my brother ! " she murmured, and fell upon the neck of Lord Fitzarthur.

Campbell and the Indian both drew back, and left her to her natural protector.

He paused for a few moments, and then cast a suspicious glance on the two as they stood, in conscious innocence, prepared to answer any questions he might please to put to them ; but he addressed them not. He said to his sister :—

"Has either of those men ill-treated or insulted you ? "

"Oh, no, no ! Dr Campbell, in particular, has been very kind ; he was seeing me home when this Indian gentleman met us ; he, too, meant no ill, but—" (whispering) "I fancy he is insane."

She was then proceeding to account to him for being out at that hour and under Campbell's protection, but he stopped her :—

"Not now, Caroline ; have you no charge to bring against either of these gentlemen ? "

"Not the slightest, my dear brother."

He then bowed to them both and walked away, supporting his sister, who seemed scarcely able to regulate her tottering steps.

When they were gone the Indian stepped up to Campbell. He made no eastern salaam, but taking off his scarlet cap he bowed low, in the old English fashion, and simply saying "*Adieu*!" disappeared.

"Halt!" roared Campbell, "I would speak a few words with you!"

No answer was returned. He searched about for him in every direction, but no traces of him were to be found. Wearied, troubled, and perplexed, he proceeded on his way to his cottage.

CHAPTER III.

THE DOCTOR AND THE FARMER.

"My mind is like a troubled fountain stirr'd,
And I myself see not the bottom of it."—SHAKESPEARE.

DR CAMPBELL walked slowly on under the rich mellow light of the waning moon, with no very agreeable companions in his own thoughts. He was forcibly struck by the manner in which Lord Fitzarthur had treated him. When he rushed among them, instead of shaking hands with him on discovering who he was, and asking him, as a friend, what was the matter, he had treated him,—the confidential physician of the family,—blameless in all his relations with Lady Caroline,—ever cautious, reserved, and prudent,—as if he were an unknown assailant, a person against whom it was likely his sister had some charge to bring. He viewed him in the same light as he did the wild, impetuous, mysterious Asiatic—"Has *either of those men* insulted you?"—and when Lady Caroline had exculpated them, with an especial compliment to himself, instead of begging his pardon, or saying a word of atonement, he had simply made to him and the Indian an apologetic bow, which they were left at liberty to divide between them, or toss up for, whichever they pleased. He had

been quite ready to sacrifice his life in saving Lady Caroline from a madman, and this was his thanks, instead of being asked to the Abbey for the night, and treated with the kindness and gratitude that he felt he deserved. As a solution for the difficulty it occurred to him—and he was not far from the truth—that Fitzarthur, finding he could not prove him guilty of *rudeness* or *assault*, had come to the conclusion that he and Caroline had met by appointment, and clandestinely, to take “a lovers’ walk” together, and that he had engaged her affections unknown to her father. What base and dishonourable conduct to have laid to his charge, and so unmerited too! And yet the more he reflected the more convinced he became that the brother entertained these suspicions with respect to him. Heaven knows it was enough for him to bear what he deserved, without the aggravation of this treachery, against which his mind revolted. How unlucky that he had met Lady Caroline! and then that they should both meet the Indian, with his horrible insulting language and very unaccountable hints. Who was he, and what could be the meaning of his conduct? Such a dangerous person must not be permitted to roam about the country freely, ready to stab people if they did not give up the female they had in charge to his wicked will. For Campbell felt convinced he was going to stab him when Fitzarthur’s fortunate interruption took place. Some steps must be taken; Mr Routledge, a magistrate, must be consulted; if the unhappy creature was mad he should be put into an asylum; if not he must be bound over to keep the peace. And this fellow was harboured by Higgin, too! Ay, he was very near forgetting that, and he would see into it before he went home. He quickened his pace, and soon reached Nannie’s cottage.

The kitchen window was open; a candle stood on the table where Higgin sat eating his supper. Campbell knocked at the cottage door which was opened by Nannie.

“Tell Higgin when he has done his supper to come out to me; I shall be sitting on the wall at the opposite side of the road.”

“Will not you come in, sir, and speak to him in the house?” said she.

“No; I prefer the open air.”

He sat down on the wall, cast his eyes over the Hill of Cones that lay beneath him, and finally fixed them on one spot, from

which he never moved them until Higgin came out of the house and stood before him. Sullenly he stood and without speaking. Campbell began :—

“Higgin, I know you take it ill of me that I would not recommend you to Miss Neville for the situation of gamekeeper, but I did not refuse because I had nothing good to say of you, as I am sure you may know, but—I cannot possibly ask a favour of that young lady. Private feelings must be respected, and I would not be more explicit to my dearest friend than I am now to you. If she could get Mr Davenport made a bishop, and that it depended on my asking her, I would neither ask her, nor give him any reason for my refusing. If you are not content with this, I can say no more.”

“Well, sir, it must be as you like, I’m no judge of your feelings; mayhap you’ve good reasons, and the report may not be true.”

“What report?” asked Campbell hastily.

“Why I was told by all the people that you were going to be married to her, and I fancied it would not be much to ask her—”

“I am not going to be married to her!” cried Campbell, “and I never shall either; such an idea never came into my head.”

Higgin remained silent and discontented. Campbell’s first words of apology were mysterious, and he suspected the lady might have refused him, and he ceased to be surprised that under those circumstances he should scruple to ask a favour of her; but Campbell’s last speech implied he had never thought of her himself, so there could be no awkwardness in doing what Mr James or any friend would do;—the wound still rankled in his bosom.

“I suppose you have done with me now, sir,” said he at last.

“By no means; I have something very important to speak of.” He then described his encounter with the Indian, the unaccountable opposition he made to his progress, his violence to Lady Caroline, and the horrible language he had made use of to himself.

“Now I ask you, Higgin,” he said in conclusion, “whether this is a character whom you should encourage to stay in the country by allowing him the protection of your roof? what on earth brought him here, or put it into his head to take up his quarters with you?”

Higgin looked astounded. His answer evaded the principal question.

"Well, sir, you astonish me; I could not suppose it possible he would have been so—so rash; 'tis very unlike him."

"Like him or unlike him," interrupted Campbell, "such proceedings must be stopped. It will be very little comfort to people when he has given them a mortal stroke, to have it whispered into their dying ear 'that it was very unlike him.' I am sure he was going to stab me: why did he use the words of Ehud, if he was not going to follow them up by the act of Ehud?"

"As to that, sir, I don't know who Mr Ehud is; as concerns this foreign gentleman,—why, I doubt he was going to murder you—"

"What!" broke in Campbell, "does that Hindoo know the Bible better than you? Did you never read the book of Judges?"

"I read my Testament, sir, and goes by it, I hope. I could read out the first chapter of St Matthew without stopping to spell a word, and that is a great deal for a poor man who is no scholar, but always handling the spade or the plough."

Campbell mused for a moment; then he said:—

"That man used one or two very singular expressions; only Lady Caroline thinks him mad, I'm sure I can't tell what her opinion of me would be." Then in an altered tone, and with a look as nearly approaching the ferocious as such a face would admit of, he cried:—

"Have you ever, by hint, or implication, if not by broad statement, betrayed me to him or any one else?"

"I vow to heaven I never have, sir."

"But you will allow at any rate, that I have very good reason to feel unsafe in his neighbourhood, and—keep him in your house if you wish, I can't hinder you, but you will be surprised some day by a visit from me and Mr Routledge to take him up as a dangerous lunatic."

"He is not a lunatic, sir."

"Then he will have to answer to a summons for a gross assault. What is his name?"

"I am sure I can't recollect the queer out-of-the-way name he has. Did he strike you, sir?"

"Not exactly; he dragged Lady Caroline Fitzarthur by the arm, and told me I should not pass until I gave her up to him! and such language!"

"The worse the language was, the better for you, sir, for the more likely was her Ladyship to be convinced he was mad."

"I see you are determined to plead for him."

"I don't want to plead for him; summons him as fast as you like. One thing I'll say; you acknowledged just now, in telling me the story, that you lifted up your cane to him, and that he had a bamboo rod in his hand that he never used, so you were nearer assaulting him than he was you: if he assaulted any one it was her Ladyship, so you'll have to bring her before the magistrates, and she must swear herself and you were walking alone together at that hour of the night."

"I am not going to place her Ladyship in such an unworthy position. The question returns, however:—what *are* we to do? are we to be left to his mercy? Is he mad?"

"He is not mad, sir; he is very passionate, but I did not expect he'd go on that way. If you will just stay quiet I will undertake he does not molest you any more on the high-road. I suppose you won't be out at night again walking with her or any other lady?"

"Of course I won't; you know it was by chance I met her."

"I do, sir, surely. Now, I'll engage he does not act any more as he did to-night, and don't you take the matter up, for you'll make nothing of it, except to expose a noble Lady. Did I ever fail you in anything I insured to you?"

"No, never."

"Then I now warrant he does not behave that way again. But as to turning him out of my house, I cannot treat him so. You spoke yourself just now of having feelings you could not expose; and though I am a poor ignorant man, I may have the same sort too, can I neither turn him out nor give my reasons for keeping him."

"Well, I suppose I must be satisfied for the present," said Campbell, rising to depart.

"I have one word more to say, sir."

"Speak on."

"That twenty pound a year you've been giving me latterly, —well, I won't trouble your worship for it any more."

"What frolic is this?"

"No frolic at all, sir; but, thank God, I am able to work, and I don't see why I should be taking the earnings of other men when I am right well able to earn for myself."

"You need not speak in such an impudent way ; it is no inconvenience to me to give you that small section of my income. Have you got any new accession of strength lately, that you can work more now than you have done for the last few years ? "

"No, sir ; time don't generally add to a man's strength, but it may open other lights to him, and I don't want your money no more."

"Higgin," said Campbell, sternly, "I see your object : you are renouncing my benefits that you may betray me with less remorse. You have still so much conscience left that you do not wish to receive my favours with one hand, and sign my death-warrant with the other. I thank you."

"You need not take on so, sir. I don't know what right you have to be always saying I'm going to injure you. I can understand how people may find out that a man *has* done a thing, or *is doing* a thing ; but how it can be divined that one is *intending* to do a thing, when he has never breathed such intentions to any one, passes my poor wits to explain ; but I suppose it is because I have got no learning. And another thing :—did you never notice or hear that people were sometimes goaded to an act by being perpetually jawed for 'intending to do it' ? But I am not going to tell your affairs, nor to take your money in future."

He then re-entered Nannie's cottage, where he meant to spend the night.

Dr Campbell proceeded on his way. In vain did his "many-musing spirit" seek to dive into the meaning of what he had lately heard and seen. Why had Higgin thrown up his pension ? What strange union was there subsisting between him and the Indian, that the former could answer for the latter that he would do his bidding, and restrain his impulsive, unreasoning Asiatic spirit at the suggestion of a rude British peasant ? Was it by chance, or from knowledge, that the Indian had uttered one word that had made him shiver through every nerve ? Who was he, and what earthly cause could he have for hating him (Campbell) with such a bitter hatred, and for heaping such venomous words on his head ? He could not possibly have wronged him in any manner, for they were utter strangers to one another. What could be the meaning of the tiger-like ferocity with which he had struggled to tear Lady Caroline from under his protection ? These were questions for which his sagacity could find no answer, and which he was obliged to lay up in the recesses of his heart until time or

chance might afford an explanation. He next surveyed his own peculiar situation ;—there were two ladies very favourably inclined to him,—there was no use in shutting his eyes any longer to the fact, awkward and ridiculous as it was ; and if he persisted in keeping them shut, he might open them when it was too late. Lady Caroline's words, uttered that night in her paroxysm, were ringing in his ears :—" I would go with him to prison and to death ! " and he believed her too ; and he knew that her woman's heart would hold more bravely to that fervid protestation than did the craven soul of him by whose lips these words were first uttered. But still not one ripple of his heart set in the direction of this young girl ; to her it was as motionless and cold as marble ; there was nothing in her nature congenial to his,—he could not love her, did he deem himself required to do so. But fortunately the requirements were all on the other side, for, whatever the lady herself might desire, Lord Fitzarthur had shown very plainly how he was disposed to treat Campbell if he attempted to appear in the light of a lover, and Campbell was quite ready to concede to his Lordship's wishes. So he resolved that he would not visit at the Abbey again unless he got a note from Lord Northwood himself, requesting of him to go there professionally, and then he would simply do his duty and withdraw immediately.

As to Miss Neville, she had quite confounded him yesterday by some hints she had thrown out ; he plainly saw he had only to ask her if he wished to be her husband,—but that he would never be. He certainly liked her better than he did Lady Caroline : she had a more vigorous intellect, and more earnest and deep affections and feeling ; Caroline's was a feeble character, and hers was a strong one ; she had some faults, and oddities, and affectations, no doubt, every one of which, however, could be eradicated by a man whom she ardently loved and respected, and the fabric that remained behind would be brightened, ennobled, strengthened. Caroline's character was defaced by a thousand little foibles, fooleries, prepossessions, and fancies ; clear them all away, and what was left behind ? nothing almost. It would have been as if you were to remove the entire of the woof from a slender web, and were to expect to find in the warp cohesion and firmness. Miss Neville's faults were stains on the surface ; Lady Caroline's formed the staple of her composition ; no deeper foundation of strength lay beneath them ; they had usurped the place of principals ; in the heiress they were subordinates which she despised

while she wilfully indulged them. But still, whatever Miss Neville was, or could be made, Campbell did not love her, and would he marry a woman he did not love because she was very rich? Disgusting thought! He would far rather unite himself to a poor woman that he did not care for, because he could come on to loving her much sooner. He would have rescued her from a world where she was forlorn, desolate, tempted; he would toil for her, comfort her, cheer her; she would look on him with trusting, devoted affection, as one to whom she owed everything, from whom she hoped everything; surely a manly heart would soon cling fondly to such a being as that! But to be linked to a Juno-like, haughty daughter of fortune—to feel that every luxury he enjoyed, and every amusement he engaged in, was the gift of her hand,—to be conscious that he, the nobler vessel, had powers that he could not exercise, rights that her independence annulled, and a superior freedom of action that she might possibly assert she had some title to control;—surely, if she adored him even, such a state as that could never beget in him a love that had not previously existed!

These ladies being disposed of, his thoughts next reverted to Mrs Davenport. What were her faults? He could not tell; he had never seen any in her. Her shining qualities, then,—what were they? He was equally at a loss to name any particular one: perhaps he could not separate himself sufficiently from her to examine her in detail; perhaps he felt too warmly towards her to scan her with a calm, critical eye, and pronounce on her a cool, approving verdict. But he was not satisfied with either of these explanations. A steady bright vision of purity—not material enough to be analysed, and to have its component parts classed, with its appropriate share of applause assigned to each—floated before his mind whenever she became the subject of his contemplation. She seemed of too ethereal a nature to be caught, studied, and described, even by the most delicate and skilful observer.

When he contrasted his Milly with the two young ladies above-mentioned, how holy and innocent she appeared! Unsought for, unsolicited by the simple child, he had clung to her from his boyhood, caught up every green sprout of affection as it was germinating in her young breast, twined and wound it round the sapling in his own, which was throwing out responsive tendrils to meet it, and thus bade the two grow to maturity together, indissolubly wrapped in one another.

Yet the love of these two unfortunate young women had nothing low or interested about it, nothing unworthy of the divine passion ; it came fresh from their hearts ; in every worldly advantage Campbell was far their inferior, but it wanted the, for him, indispensable fascination,—it was unsued for, unasked for, of hasty growth, it might be a whim,—it certainly had too much of earth in it ;—from his deep soul it could meet with no response. Having arranged to his satisfaction his line of conduct with respect to the Northwood family, he next laid his plans about Sunville ; he regretted much that he had gone there so often lately, but it was all Mr Warner's fault ; wherever that old caitiff turned up he was sure to bring embarrassment and woe to his innocent victim. It was a pretty thing that the servants of Miss Neville were beginning to notice their young mistress's fancy,—for it was they, of course, who had put about the report that Higgin heard ;—but it should be stopped as soon as possible ; he would visit there very seldom, and not dine there any more, and would take the first opportunity of recommending Miss Neville sea-bathing to strengthen her ankle after her accident.

When he got home he found Rachel watching anxiously for him : he had told her he would be back by nine, and it was now near twelve o'clock.

"Oh, but you're welcome !" she cried ; then—"Dear soul, you look pale and tired though ! Lie down on the sofa, and I'll put on your slippers."

He was a man towards whom women felt a longing to use tender epithets ; he was so gentle, and so sad, and so lonely ; so made to be loved, and yet, apparently, with none to love him ; returning night after night to his cheerless home, to receive such welcome as might be accorded to him by his maid and his dog. He shook hands kindly with his Rachel, and drank off the entire bowl of posset. It was a perfect blessing to see a woman who had not matrimonial views respecting him ; who could touch his hand without trembling, and could meet his eye with the tranquil and steady look of quiet friendship. He went to bed cursing his fate, or Mr Warner, for with him they were synonymous terms ; he was in a perpetual turmoil about women, and yet doomed to a joyless, companionless existence ; he wondered what girls meant by setting their affections on him of all people, a pale, worn, broken-hearted mope, looking ten years older than he was ;—this being the light in which he was peased to contemplate himself.

CHAPTER IV.

SABINA AND HER MISTRESS.

“Nought ’s so sublime as energetic bile,
Though horrible to see, yet grand to tell,
Like ocean warring ’gainst a rocky isle ;
And the deep passions flashing through her form,
Made her a beautiful embodied storm.”—BYRON.

LORD NORTHWOOD, on coming home late in the evening and inquiring for his daughter, was greeted with the intelligence that she had not been seen or heard of since she had taken an early dinner, several hours before. Carriages, horses, and servants were all quietly in their places : one of the females recollected having observed her in the afternoon standing on the steps, dressed in the bonnet and shawl that she generally wore in the garden ; so all the out-door premises were searched, Anthony the monk’s cell being in no wise forgotten. The distracted father then despatched Lord Fitzarthur and two footmen to scour the country in three different directions, and during their absence he walked up and down the dining-room in the greatest agitation, not touching a morsel of food. When her brother brought her in, he rushed to embrace her, and she, sinking in his arms, got into violent hysterics, perfectly overcome by the exciting scenes she had gone through. She was put to bed immediately, and given reviving draughts ; no questions were asked for the present, Lord Fitzarthur satisfying the Earl on the principal points.

Poor Sabina, on her part, had spent two hours before her mistress’s return rocking herself to and fro, and moaning and crying most piteously. She loved Lady Caroline with all the warmth of her impulsive southern extraction (her mother had been a Neapolitan, though her father was a Swiss), and indeed she had been always treated by her young mistress with great gentleness and kindness. The chant with which she accompanied her tears and sobs, was—“ Elle est partie ! elle est partie ! Elle ne retournera jamais ! que deviendrai-je, seule dans ce château ? ” —“ Traître, perfide ! ” “ Perfide, traître ! ” was the refrain, ut-

tered with a menacing flash of indignation from her dark flooded eyes ; this being an apostrophe to some imaginary youth, who, she took for granted, had decoyed her beloved Lady from the paternal roof.

As soon as she perceived Lady Caroline slowly ascending the stairs leaning on her father and followed by the waiting-woman and housekeeper, her joy became unbounded. She shrieked, danced, fell into a wild fit of laughter, and kissed her mistress's hands and neck, totally regardless of the proximity of the Earl. Caroline's heart smote her when she recollected that she had just put matters in training for sending her away ; but still it could not be helped—it must be done.

The next morning Lady Caroline breakfasted in bed, and would have remained there the whole day, only she thought it almost certain that Dr Campbell would come to the Abbey in the afternoon to inquire what her state was after her very unusual trials. But, of course, no Campbell came, and she lay languidly on the sofa, carefully watched by her father. She gave him a very faithful account of her visit to Mrs Ford, concealing however her motive for going, saying that as she was alone she thought it would amuse her to walk to the poor woman's cottage, and read to her as Miss Bolton did ; she was so unaccustomed to think for herself that she had let the darkness steal on unobserved, while listening to Mrs Ford's interesting stories of old times ; she granted she had been very imprudent in setting off in the dark attended by no one but a countryman that she knew nothing about ; she spoke of her meeting with Campbell in so simple and natural a manner that it never entered into the Earl's head to suspect that there was design in the case, particularly as he had spoken a few words to the doctor at the gate, and had been told by him that he was going to vaccinate an infant. She did not repeat a word of the strange and terrible expressions of the Indian ; indeed, she was convinced he was insane, and why pain herself by repeating his ravings ? She merely told her father that he was crazed, and insisted on seeing her home, and rudely repulsed Dr Campbell, who, on his part, showed himself quite ready to sacrifice his life rather than give up the care of her. Lord Northwood accordingly came to a very different conclusion from what his son had done ; praised Campbell warmly, and resolved to write him a note of thanks if he did not soon see him. After giving her a gentle lecture for her rashness, and assuring

her that she should have a nice little pony-chaise to drive from cot to cot in whenever she wished to visit the poor in her neighbourhood, he left her to attend to some other affairs, and she spent the rest of the day vainly watching for Dr Campbell, and torturing herself to discover every possible argument for and against his reported engagement to Miss Neville.

Dr Campbell contrived to get the earliest intelligence of the departure of Amelia's father. It was Wednesday. The moment his breakfast was over he was impatient to go to the Vicarage and see how they all were, but on reflection he thought it better to wait till Davenport should be gone to church. Not but that he would be very glad to see the poor fellow, but then he was very noisy, and had such high spirits he might be too much for him to-day, as he was a good deal upset since the night he had met the Indian and Lord Fitzarthur, and had been treated in such a manner by each in succession.

The front door was open and he walked in ; he never knocked at that house, of course, unless he wanted particularly to see a servant ; his power was paramount to all other power there ; Davenport was the master, but he was the *genius loci*—the bearer of balm and the health-preserver, both to the precious children and the "*placens uxor*." He went to the nursery first ; she was not there ; the maids smiled their welcome, and the children flew to him and hung about him, and would have shown him all the presents grandpapa had brought them, but he, having embraced them, hurried away. He went next to the dressing-room, and knocked timidly at the door.

"Come in," said the voice that was wont to heal all his wounds.

He entered. She was standing before her press settling it, and Sammy was sitting on a cloak in the middle of the room, playing with such cast-off articles as she was pleased to throw him.

Campbell flew to her and seized both her hands in his, and wrung them as if he would have wrung them off.

"Sweet, how are you ? How have you been ever since ? "

And he devoured her face with his eyes, for it was all he could dare to do. She answered in her usual soft, quiet manner—of course she was "quite well." Many a woman's "quite well" bears a very singular relation to the exact meaning of those two words.

"But you look very pale, my darling!"

Oh! that word came out quite unintentionally; he hardly knew what he was saying; he was holding her hands, and all his pulses were throbbing up to her, and he could not press her to his breast in one embrace that would have quieted everything. He continued:—

"You are very pale, Milly; but you have just parted from your father."

"Oh, it is not that," she answered; "he went away early this morning and I did not get up; he told me last night I must not. Arthur got him coffee, and everything he wanted—it is not that."

"Then you have been walking too much; ah! I was not here to check you, and your father did not consider—"

She interrupted him.

"No, indeed, Robert; we never walked together; I drove out with him every day, and showed him the country; and when he wished to walk Arthur alone accompanied him; it is not that—" And she lifted up her melting blue eyes and looked into his, pleadingly, as if to say, "Ask me no more! I should not look pale; I have had all my legitimate blessings about me for the last ten days, father, husband, children: I ought to be happy—ask me no more!"

There was not a thought in those eyes that he did not read; ay, far more distinctly came her meaning than if the most telling words had uttered it in the most expressive language yet invented. They were silent for a space; then he said,—

"Now you have been standing for the last hour, perhaps, in front of this foolish press, but your master is come back and you stand no more;" and with his sweet, playful authority he led her to her arm-chair, and placed her in it, and stood looking at her.

"I like that pink and white muslin gown very much; far better than those silks you generally wear; but I suppose they are more stylish and fashionable. Now you look as if you were dressed in sunset clouds. But this cap—have you worn caps ever since you were ill?"

"Oh no, only in the morning; I will take it off for dinner."

"It must come off now," said he, with that smile that Lord Fitzarthur dreaded so much; and he lifted it off daintily with his delicate fingers, and dropped it on the table

Then he watched some of the rich curls that it had partly confined, as they tumbled without restraint upon her neck. He next sat down on the floor at her feet; he was fond of placing himself in the most humble posture with respect to her, as if to show how completely she was his divinity. He laid his hands on her knees and looked up into her face; the virgin goddess Athenè, herself, allowed her suppliants to do thus much.

"And so they sat; the two whom God had joined together, and whom man had put asunder,—not quite, however, as you may perceive, but as far as he was able, poor creature! His most vehement acts sometimes best show his impotence. He hacks the worm in two, and each part walks off, a complete animal, as naturalists assure us. His division is Nature's multiplication; he throws for destruction and she turns up doubled vitality. Thus she laughs at him, and baffles him in the case of the very meanest of created things. When he turns his mind to doing his will on his fellow-creatures, the result is somewhat different. Two hearts have moved to one another by the laws of attraction, and are just united; he hews them asunder with his axe, and makes them one for ever.

Meantime Sammy, on his cloak, began to think himself neglected and ill-used. When his papa came into the room he was accustomed to be caught up in his arms and entertained with a succession of crowings, but these columbian demonstrations were very stupid things for him,—nay, perhaps his instincts rebelled against them; certain it is, the loyal little fellow turned towards his mamma, and began to roar most lustily. He was very like his father, and, as he fixed his overflowing eyes on Amelia, she thought she saw Davenport's piercing look penetrating her through that indignant shower. His voice too, although he was so young, had a marvellous tone of his father's in it, and it came ringing in Campbell's ear like a shout from his friend. They both sprang up; Mrs Davenport caught her child and caressed him, and Campbell said,—

"Come to the garden; it is a shame to have us spending this fine day in the house."

He took Sammy from her, and she put on her bonnet, and they went down-stairs. In the hall they met Jemmy.

"Oh, doctor," he cried, for they had cured him of saying "Daddy," "let me show you that beautiful magic lantern that grandpapa brought me."

"Go and get your Latin lesson for me first," answered Campbell; "and if you come on to be a good scholar, I will show you finer slides in Livy than you can possibly exhibit to me in your lantern. Is not that a puzzle? Be off directly."

He did not want to have Jemmy in the garden; he preferred Sammy somehow.

"Yes, go to your lessons," said his mamma; "you have been a great idler since grandpapa came to us. But first tell the cook that Dr Campbell is to dine here."

The boy ran off. "And how do you know I intend to dine here?" said Campbell, slapping her on the cheek with his glove.

"Because I know you are honest, Robert," answered she, with her own sunny smile, "and you owe us such an immense debt that I am sure you would not have shown your face here to-day if you were not prepared to pay one instalment."

They proceeded to the garden and buried themselves in the bower that he had made for her, now dark and thick with the ample foliage of summer. He placed Milly on his left hand, set the little child on his knee, clasped him round with his right arm, and threw his left—Heaven knows where,—I'm sure I don't. I will no longer be a spy on this unfortunate man, nor hunt him down to the last haven of his broken spirit.

Crushed in the morning of life by Mr Warner,—now in his prime desolate by his solitary hearth,—importuned in the world by caresses and overtures from women, to him more offensive than neglect,—rebuffed by their connections in a manner most wounding to his feelings, as if he was accountable for female fancies (Miss Maria Neville had begun to show him, though not so plainly as Lord Fitzarthur, that she did not want him for a brother-in-law);—outraged, alarmed, and threatened from other quarters, with memories of the past constantly haunting him, and vague apprehensions about the future frequently disturbing his mind,—no wonder if his bleeding, quivering heart sought such balm as might still be granted by one who felt that she had been untrue to him, but with whom he knew he was safe, for since she had wedded another he was aware she should keep firm to her vow;—no wonder if he clung a little too closely to the only being whose sympathies were ever with him,—to the brave soul that would not let him abuse his power,—to the loving soul that was the same now that it had been in the recesses of Warner Park,—and to the matured woman, not ignorant of human sor-

row and suffering, who would bear his burden with him, and thereby deprive it of half its weight. So he told her of various things that had troubled him, since last he saw her, but of his delicate position with regard to the two young ladies he of course said nothing.

Day after day Lady Caroline had been vainly expecting Dr Campbell to call, as she thought the commonest politeness demanded, to inquire in person how she felt after a night of such unwonted exertion and agitation to her. It never once came into her mind to suspect that he might be hurt at the manner in which her brother had treated him; she never contemplated him in relation to any of the family except to herself. She next begged of her father to write him the note of thanks which the Earl had said his conduct merited, and this was accordingly done, and an invitation to dinner was added moreover. A polite answer came; he was happy her Ladyship had not suffered; he had done nothing but his duty; the dinner invitation was respectfully declined. So thus affairs remained for the present; she strove to keep up appearances, but the task grew every day more difficult.

About a week after her unfortunate visit to Mrs Ford, Higgin made his appearance at Northwood Abbey, authorized by the Miss Nevilles to say that, if Lady Caroline still wished to part with her Swiss servant, they would be glad to receive her into their establishment. It was a relief to Lady Caroline to hear of a comfortable home for Sabina, and she immediately informed Higgin, through the footman, that the young girl should be sent to Sunville the next day in one of Lord Northwood's conveyances.

Lady Caroline's next difficulty was how to impart to Sabina that she was, the very next morning, to change her mistress and her home. She had, some time before, intimated to her that she would part with her when she could provide her with a comfortable situation, but Sabina either never believed it, or had, apparently, quite forgotten it. Caroline felt wretched; she knew the intelligence would burst on Sabina like a thunderbolt; but still it must come from herself; she felt the impropriety of communicating such information through another servant. So she ran up at once desperately to her dressing-room, where Sabina was employed at some business for her, and told her her fate in that abrupt manner which is usual when people want to get a disagreeable matter over as quickly as possible, and fear their feelings will overpower them. Sabina sent a lightning-flash on her from her dark eyes:—

"Il n'est pas vrai ! vous vous moquez de moi ! eh, vous plaisantez, sans doute !"

Caroline, trembling, strove to assume dignity.

"Sabina, it would ill become me to jest with my servants ; whatever I say to you is serious truth."

She might as well have attempted to check a spring-tide by opening her parasol against it with a commanding air. The child of the south threw herself on the sofa, and began to utter terrible screams, joined with a torrent of tears. When she became articulate, she said,—

"Vous me chassez, vous me chassez ;—quel est mon crime ? Je m'en repens ;—je ferai tout ce que vous voulez." Then she sprang up and looked fierce and menacing : "Me bannir ainsi ! loin de mon pays ! Vous n'osez pas !"

"You must not use this language, Sabina ; I am not sending you out on the world ; I have provided you with a safe home, where there is an elderly married lady who will take the best care of you—better than I can."

"Non, non, je n'irai pas . . . ces vilaines dames !"

Then, thinking an appeal in her own language might have more effect on her mistress, she cried,—

"Strange faces in a strange country ; you will not put me among them ! Send me back to la belle France, where you found me, or keep me near your own face, and I will think I am there. Do you remember the first day you saw me ? Oh, I was so happy then ! But I liked your gentle looks, and I came with you ; but I must remain near you ;—O ma belle et bonne maîtresse, ne me chassez pas !" and she flung her arms round Lady Caroline's waist, who straightway burst into tears.

At this moment Elpsley, who had heard the screams, hastened into the room and looked aghast, seeing the state of affairs ; but, before she could speak, Sabina cried, while a wild joy beamed from her eyes,—

"Ha ! elle pleure ! elle pleure ! je dois rester ! je le savais bien ! elle n'aura pas le cœur de me chasser ;—elle m'aime ; Elsy, regardez ses larmes !"

"Méchante fille ! que voulez vous ?" said Elpsley, pulling her away from Lady Caroline ; "my Lady, shall I take her down and lock her up ?"

"Lock me up !" exclaimed Sabina, with an annihilating look at the waiting-woman ; then, changing her manner, with an ex-

traordinary rapidity, she said,—“ Yes, do, good Elsy, lock me up, keep me here always ; put the key in your pocket, and they will not be able to tear me away to-morrow ; I will stay in prison, if you will bring her to see me every day.”

“ My dear Sabina,” cried Lady Caroline, “ this must not continue ; you cannot stay ; pray make up your mind ; in a week you will be quite at home with the Miss Nevilles ; they are rich and generous, and reside in a beautiful place ;—you will have every comfort. Elpsley, do take her away, and assist her to arrange and pack her clothes, and I will give her two handsome dresses—”

Sabina interrupted her.

“ I will have no dresses,—no dresses ! Give me all the clothes in the world, and—*je suis nue, si vous me chassez.*”

She was led off by Elpsley, and “ *Vous me chassez* ” rebounded more and more feebly in the distance, until it was finally snapped asunder by the dash of the spring-door that separated the waiting-women’s apartments from the rest of the house.

To do Sabina justice, the thought that she was going to be separated from her admirer scarcely entered into her consideration during the late scene. She had such a passionate love for her young mistress—the sight of whom ever recalled happy scenes, cloudless skies, the laughter, the sports, and the melodies of France, where she had resided for five years previous to her entering Lord Northwood’s service—that the intelligence that she was going to be separated from her for ever was in itself too stupefying to permit any other sorrow to claim a rivalry with it in her breast. But the other affliction, with all its bitterness, took full possession of her the moment she entered her own room, and the rest of the day was spent in moans and ejaculations which rendered her incapable of any exertion, and the preparations for her departure had to be made by one of the other domestics.

Lady Caroline wept for an hour after Sabina had been removed from her apartment. Her words, “ I will stay in prison if you will bring *her* to see me every day,” were knocking at her heart with an appeal that she could scarcely resist. Several times she was on the point of ringing the bell and sending her word that she had changed her mind, and would permit her to remain, but she was as often checked by the recollection of the strange effect such conduct would produce on the minds of the Sunville ladies, so, with a heavy heart, she let things take their course.

When her father and brother came in to dinner they were exasperated on learning the cause of her swollen eyes and agitated appearance. The Earl peremptorily forbid her having another interview with that "impudent minx;" he knew well what it was when a "foreigner" got into her "tantarums,"—a house did not recover it for a month. Gordon should pay her her wages and see her sent off respectably and comfortably; ay, he would rather do it himself than let his child go near her again. She implored permission to bid her farewell, but Lord Fitzarthur put a stop to anything further on the subject.

"Caroline, to what end would it avail? The same scene would be all played over a second time; yield to our father in this; your wishes are very seldom thwarted,—indeed, never, but with a view to your own personal comfort and tranquillity. I will take care that she shall know it is not your fault that you do not take leave of her."

He then made her sit down to chess with him until bedtime, when he saw her to her room. He next instructed Gordon to have everything in readiness for Sabina to leave the Abbey at eight the next morning. Finally he ordered Elpsley to inform the young girl that she had made her mistress so unwell by her tempestuous behaviour in the afternoon, that Lord Northwood had forbidden her coming into her presence again.

Elpsley thought proper to follow her own judgment on the occasion; she would give her no such message, she settled in her mind; drive her mad indeed completely, by telling her she had made Lady Caroline very ill, when she already showed as much madness as those about her were inclined to put up with. So she simply told her to go to bed, and that everything else would be settled in the morning.

In the morning accordingly she was called at half-past six, and desired to prepare as quickly as possible for her departure. She said there was no need of haste, as she could not go until she saw her mistress.

"You go at eight," said Elpsley, drily, "and her Ladyship is never down till nine."

"I will not go without taking leave of her!" she screamed.

"My Lord gave orders that you should go at eight," said two or three women at the same time.

She burst into tears.

"And she would not see me last night! Not one loving

word!" Then she fell into her favourite language again. "Elle me chasse! sans adieu! Je ne la reverrai jamais! Je pars pour toujours, je ne reviendrai jamais!" "Toujours, jamais!" "jamais, toujours!" formed the dismal refrain of this her last lament, as they vainly endeavoured to make her eat some breakfast.

The groom was waiting in a gig at the yard-gate, and the gardener was standing near it, ready to hand her in. At length she appeared, escorted by two females. She was no longer weeping. Her face was pale, and her look fixed, and almost ferocious. She did not walk, but slid, or rather rubbed her feet along the ground without lifting them up, just in the manner of Rachel, and like that actress she made a dead halt every fifty seconds or so, saying, in a suffocated voice,

"Elle me chasse,—sans chagrin,—sans adieu; comme si j'étais une coquine! Moi! qui l'a servie avec tant de fidélité! Elle me le payera! Elle me le payera! Vengeance, vengeance!"

They entreated of her not to use such "shocking language," but she continued this mode of moving and these words until she reached the vehicle. Her lover pressed her hand, but she took scarcely any notice of him; a passion stronger than love, or at least stronger than the love she felt for him, had taken possession of her soul, and in this state of mind she was whirled away from Northwood Abbey.

CHAPTER V.

THE HEIRESS FORMS A GRAND SCHEME.

"Ingiustissimo amor, perchè sì raro
Corrispondenti fai nostri desiri?
Onde, perfido, vien che t'è sì caro
Il discorde voler ch' in dui cor miri?"—ARIOSTO.

LORD FITZARTHUR could not for a moment doubt his sister's word when she assured him that her meeting with Dr Campbell on the night when they were found in so singular a situation was purely accidental. Still he was convinced that there was an at-

tachment on both sides, and he was resolved that the intimacy interrupted by himself, rather roughly he allowed, should not be renewed. He considered her in pretty good health, and he trusted he might keep her so. She should not pine in solitude, of course; she should have associates worthy of her regard. He resolved to invite, with his father's permission, a party of his noble, fashionable friends to spend the shooting season at the Abbey. They would make her ashamed to confess, to herself even, that she had ever looked with favour on a "dispensary doctor!" But in the mean time she must not be permitted to sit moping at home, brooding over the past, and relapsing into nervous debility.

So a few days after Sabina went away he ordered the carriage, and told her she must go out to drive; that he would not hear of her shutting herself up in such a manner any longer; and he suggested a visit to Miss Bolton.

She consented; in fact she was wishing much to see Sarah, but had not energy enough to make a movement in that direction, she was so prostrated by the report of Campbell's marriage, which she thought was confirmed by his thus completely forgetting to pay her the common civility of a visit. So, glad to see her equipage at the door without her having the trouble of ordering it, she put on her bonnet and stepped in; and not far from Laburnum Lodge she met a gentleman on horseback, who proved to be Dr Campbell himself.

She stopped the carriage directly, and he approached the window. He made many kind inquiries, and was told that she was "quite well." They spoke of their late adventure, and he affected to laugh at the Indian.

"But you are very naughty," she said (she was trying playfulness, poor being!); "although you were such a gallant cavalier on the night in question, you never followed your chivalry up by a single call to inquire how I felt after having been nearly captured by our mysterious assailant."

This quite upset him; if she had been cold and sulky he could have dealt much better with her;—he did not know what to say; his present position with regard to her and her brother was far from being one to be disposed of by airy banter,—rather, very delicate and embarrassing,—and yet how could he be stiff and unkind to the poor young creature who met him so playfully in spite of his neglect, and whose only crime was to like

him too much? Consequently he blushed, and did not answer directly, which she took for a good omen, thinking he was quite ashamed of himself. She said cheerfully,—

“Come, if you are sorry for your sins, we will forgive you on condition you spend the day with us to-morrow; papa is surprised that you refused him last Tuesday.”

“It is quite impossible, I fear; I must go to Sunville to-morrow,” he answered. This was the first excuse that came into his head.

“What! are they ill there again?” said she.

“Oh, no, they are all well there; but—I am engaged to dine with them to-morrow.” And he blushed again, for he was quite unaccustomed to tell even a white lie. But the blushes, the embarrassment, the engagement to dinner, were all enough for her; the conviction, kept at bay till now, rushed on her with a force not to be parried;—he was decidedly going to be married to Miss Neville!

He was astonished at the change in her face, but he was saved the trouble of taking any notice of it, for she waved him an adieu with her hand, and sank back in the carriage;—he, thus dismissed, rode on.

The coachman, little dreaming of the earthquake that had taken place in the human heart at the inside of that brilliant equipage, whipped on his pampered and mettlesome horses, and they soon arrived at Laburnum Lodge.

It is some time since we looked into the interior of our friends the Boltons; other affairs demanded our attention, and there was nothing very important going on among them. Neither love nor jealousy was agitating that tranquil domicile, and whatever little fun or humour had been wont to brighten it was gone for the present.

A few days after the walk to Blackheath George had quitted home to spend about two months in the house of a clergyman who, by the kind exertions of Mr Davenport, had undertaken, on moderate terms, to complete the preparations necessary for his entering Cambridge in the ensuing October. Edmund was steadily pursuing his medical studies. So Sarah and Lucy were sitting silently at work in the parlour with their father when Lord Northwood's carriage stopped at the gate.

Sarah was very glad to see it, for she had heard nothing of Caroline since the day they walked together to Blackheath, but

on her entering the parlour she was appalled by the ghastly looks of her friend.

Lady Caroline kissed the two girls, and then Mr Bolton would not be contented without a similar salute; this made her smile, and on the whole the three kisses did her good. Anything like affection and sympathy from persons of her own sex was a balm to her forlorn heart; she longed to pour out all her feelings and her sufferings to some judicious, loving female who could feel for, comfort, and advise her, and she was sensible the time was come; she had never stood so completely alone before; her brother had till now been her sole companion and confidant, as far as a young man can be so to a young girl; but a kind of estrangement had arisen between them; he suspected her of an attachment that he abhorred; she feared him, and could not speak to him on the subject that most interested her; so they could no longer be happy together;—she would tell all to Sarah;—she must do it or die.

When she sat down Sarah inquired anxiously whether she was ill.

"Oh, no, only I got a fright; but it was nothing; don't mind me; I am dreadfully nervous to-day."

"Shall I give you some hartshorn?" said Sarah.

"No, dearest Sarah, I am better now."

The wound received to-day was too deep for either Sarah's hartshorn or Mrs Marsh's brandy to remedy.

"Sarah!" she cried, "you must promise you will come and spend a few days with me very soon—as soon as possible;—do not refuse;—I have a great deal to say to you—that I *must* say; Mr Bolton seems pretty well,—you will not be afraid to leave him;—promise me positively;—what day?"

She was growing quite hysterical; Sarah was very unhappy for her.

"My dear Caroline, indeed I will go to you very soon, but I cannot exactly name the day, for Dr Campbell has ordered papa a very powerful medicine; even two drops above the prescribed quantity would be highly dangerous, so I permit no one but myself to measure it; but he is to stop it in a few days."

At the unexpected mention of Campbell's name, Caroline turned of a leaden hue, and seemed ready to fall from her chair. What Sarah had suspected was now plain to her, namely, that something new had happened respecting this wretched business, what it was she could not imagine, but one thing seemed certain,

—there was a crisis coming ; well, it was better it should ; for as long as she persisted in wearing the mask and fostering the poison, her life was being sapped without hope or remedy. She said everything soothing and affectionate that she could in a general way, and Caroline expressed herself satisfied to wait for a few days. She also told the Boltons of Sabina's tragical passages and forced departure, adding that that was one of the chief causes of her present nervous state. This excuse for her "*triste figura*" being given by her, and received with reservation on the part of Sarah, and full faith on that of Lucy, she took her leave.

When she got home she went to bed immediately ; she felt really ill now. She had been subject to a very distressing internal pain before she came to reside in the country, but after she had conformed to Dr Campbell's judicious rules, and pursued a simple life, taking plenty of air and exercise, it had ceased to trouble her ; for the last month, however, she had nearly given up these customs, and since her unfortunate visit to Mrs Ford her mind (which seemed to influence the attacks very much) had been in such a disturbed state, that it scarcely required the catastrophe of to-day to bring on the old pain with alarming force.

When the dinner-bell rang, the gentlemen were informed that she was in bed ;—they were at her side in a moment ;—the father cried out that he would send forthwith for Dr Campbell ; the brother looked daggers ; death before the doctor ! She settled the matter herself without delay ;—she would not see the doctor ;—if he came to the house she would lock her door ; she did not want any advice ; she wished to be left alone.

They both looked astonished ; Fitzarthur was completely at fault ; he could not conceive what new state of mind prompted this sudden decision. Her father asked her what she would have for dinner ;—she would have no dinner ;—she implored of them to go away ;—she was really too ill to have gentlemen in the room. They withdrew ; the Earl charging Elpsley to watch her symptoms and report to him, for assistance he must have, if she did not very soon get better. They then went down to their dinner, which they ate in silence and uneasiness ; and thus commenced the first act of the autumnal drama of which Lord Fitzarthur had planned so agreeable a sketch in the morning.

But while Lady Caroline was writhing under the ruin of her hopes, and the imaginary triumph of her rival, that rival was far from being in an enviable condition. Still, hers was a mind

stronger to bear, quicker to originate, and bolder to execute, than that of poor Caroline Fitzarthur. Disappointment might kill Miss Neville likewise, but she would not yield her bosom to the blow until every human resource had been exhausted. "Letty Cope" had succeeded in convincing her—not a very difficult task—that Campbell was her devoted admirer, but was doubtless too modest to dare to aspire to her hand; and she on her part had given him as much encouragement as would have emboldened any man on earth to try his chance, and still he spoke not! truly he was shy and timid beyond belief and bearing; and what was still worse, he was giving up calling, and had refused the last invitation to dinner. She got into an agony of doubt and anxiety; perhaps owing to an excess of delicacy on his part, a morbid dread of being refused, she should lose him; and two hearts that only required a little explanation to render them completely happy, might, for want of some energy on her side, be made miserable for life.

While she was considering how she would recall him she noticed (it was the morning after Lady Caroline had taken to her bed) that her mother ate hardly any breakfast, and looked rather pale. On being questioned, Mrs Neville pleaded guilty to a derangement of the stomach.

When the two girls and Miss Cope were sitting in the drawing-room after breakfast, Miss Neville began to lament the condition of her poor mamma, and declared that something must be done for her.

"She always manages herself very successfully when she gets these little ailments," observed Maria.

"That may do very well until a certain age, Maria; but mamma must not be allowed to go on quacking herself for ever; and now that she is not young, it might be quite dangerous if she were to get an obstinate indigestion."

"Dyspepsia is your word," interrupted Maria, without looking up from her sketching.

"The word I choose is *my* word," retorted Miss Neville, haughtily; "and if I make myself understood, language can go no further. I know a doctor must be got for mamma."

"You ought to make language a little more definite at least, Alicia, to render it perfectly intelligible to me. For a doctor perhaps you mean *the* doctor; am I right?"

"I cannot pretend to dive into your meaning," answered

Miss Neville, looking red and angry ; "mamma must have medical advice, wherever it is procured ; I don't think that is a very sibylline sentence, nor a surprising desire on the part of a daughter, and I will go and speak to her immediately ;" and she swept out of the room.

"You see, Letty, she is determined to bring back that man whom I thought we had shaken off," said Maria ; "there is scarcely anything the matter with mamma."

"Poor thing ! it is pleasant to see a daughter so anxious," said Miss Cope.

"You know in your heart, Letty, that is not what she is thinking of ; she can't live without this man at her elbow ; it is truly shocking ! if she marries him, I vow—" and Maria was obliged to stop short in her threat, for she could not hit on any way of punishing her independent sister ; she knew full well that, if she declared she would never see Alicia more, it would give her not the least concernment, provided she could get Dr Campbell in her place.

"But there is no talk of marriage," said Miss Cope ; "he is a most agreeable man to pass an evening with ; in the country too, where there is very little choice."

"Letty Cope ! you are quite aware of the way in which she is going on to him ; if she brings him back again she will certainly do something dreadfully foolish ; you know more than you will tell ; confess,—has not she some horrid plan for disgracing herself and us ?"

"She has a strong sense of her own dignity," said Miss Cope, who was relieved from any further interrogatories by the entrance of Miss Neville, who seemed quite satisfied with the result of her interview with her mother. She went to her desk and wrote a note, and, having directed and sealed it, she carried it off.

"Letty, to whom was that note directed ?" asked Maria.

"Indeed I don't know."

"You were as close as possible to it when you took her the lighted taper."

"My sight is so bad."

"Then I don't know how in the world you can see to work that mat for the china vase."

"The hand learns to run mechanically from stitch to stitch after some practice," said Miss Cope.

How long a lady can remain without bursting in an ignorance that she is very eager to have dissipated, it is difficult to determine ; for she generally makes such strenuous efforts to get light thrown on it, that she is blessed with success before poor Patience is allowed any chance of exhibiting her influence. Certain it is that Miss Maria Neville remained painfully curious and heroically silent until about three in the afternoon, when she was mercifully relieved by the entrance of Sabina. This old friend of ours, terrible as the wind-lashed ocean when she was angry, but now mild as May, was beginning to be reconciled to her new abode. She never mentioned Lady Caroline, and if questioned in any way about her would answer only,—

"De grace, ne m'en parlez pas ; elle m'a outragée ; elle est ingrate !"

Ardent both in love and hatred, she was deeply unforgiving if she thought that the former met with a requital unworthy of its deserts. She now tripped gaily into the room and said to Miss Neville,—

"Monsieur le docteur vient d'arriver, ma'mselle ; il se trouve dans le salon avec Madame ; je l'ai vu très souvent dans le château de Milord ; oh ! je l'aime tant !"

"What do you mean by saying you love him ?" asked Miss Neville, haughtily.

"Il ressemble beaucoup à mon père, et voilà, ma'mselle, pourquoi je l'aime tant."

Maria began to laugh, angry though she was at his arrival.

"I would thank you to speak English," said Miss Neville to Sabina, piqued, and not knowing how else to vent herself ; "you know I hate to be pestered with French."

"Whatever you please, Miladi," said she.

"You are to speak nothing but French to me, Sabina," said Maria, "as that was my chief reason for wishing you to come here."

"Sans doute, ma'mselle," said the poor girl ; and then, looking from the one sister to the other, she muttered, "Anglais, Français,—cela ne sera pas difficile ;—" and seemed to be endeavouring to reconcile herself to her double allowance of mistress.

"How old is this father of yours ?" asked Miss Neville ; "a young man, I suppose."

Sabina put up her fingers to count his years.

"One hand will do, Sabina," said Maria; "let each finger stand for ten; five fingers are just the number you require; your father of course must be fifty?"

"Eh, que non!" said she, indignantly; "il n'avait que trente ans quand je l'ai quitté; j'avais une marâtre; je ne pouvais rester." Then turning to Miss Neville,—*"Miladi, I could not live with my new mother, so I went to Paris to my aunt, the wife of a confiseur; but I loved my father very much; he had beautiful eyes, like that doctor's, but more fiery—"*

"Well, we have heard enough about him for the present," said Miss Neville, impatiently; "go to the hall, and, when the doctor comes out of the room where mamma is, show him in here."

Sabina retired.

"I must learn exactly what diet mamma is to follow, she is so careless; is not she, Letty Cope?" said Miss Neville.

"Indeed not at all particular; as easily pleased as if she had only a hundred a year," said the obsequious Miss Cope.

Maria said nothing, and in a short time Dr Campbell made his appearance. He looked serious, almost gloomy, and Maria was half afraid her mother was worse than she had supposed. Miss Neville thought very little about her mother; to her, Campbell had a distant look of estrangement that shocked her; she supposed she had affronted him. He shook hands with the three ladies and sat down.

"What do you think of mamma?" said Maria.

"Oh, she is not very bad," answered he.

"A mild attack of dyspepsia probably?" said she.

"What disease is that, Miss Maria Neville?" said he, with a kind of smile that by no means endeared him to his future "sister-in-law."

"I'm sure I think it is a very common disease, and you know very well what I mean; but perhaps I did not pronounce it quite right, though I think I did; I wish you would tell me."

Miss Neville would have laughed if anything could make her laugh then.

"A very trifling mistake," said Campbell, still looking disagreeable; "but we do not expect that you will be an adept at Greek words, or understand our craft; you should be only the charming Thalia or Euterpe, and leave us to the sterner labours of Hippocrates."

"Hush! I don't want compliments, and references to the

Muses, worn threadbare long ago," cried she, irritated beyond measure at the cold irony of his manner. "Will you please to tell me what is the matter with mamma?"

"Only a slight derangement of the stomach;" then turning to Miss Neville,—“I recommend you strongly to take Mrs Neville to Harrowgate without delay, for the season is advancing, and—” He was going on, but she broke in—

"To Harrowgate! all the way to Harrowgate! so you are driving me out of the country!"

"Surely not, Miss Neville, when I am simply advising you to go with your mother to a place that will be serviceable to her health."

"I'm sure I do not want to prevent her from going there if she requires it, but why do you tell me to take her? she is old enough to go by herself I suppose, or else Miss Cope or my sister could go with her; there are other persons to whom we owe a duty as well as our parents ('yourself, among the rest,' she might have said; 'I will stick by you until I conquer you'). I cannot leave home at present; I have a great deal to do; harvest is commencing, and I have promised the tenants a great harvest-home; in fact, I am under several engagements; mamma may go wherever she requires, but you need not desire me to 'take her,' for I really cannot."

He answered,—

"I did not know you had so much business at home, Miss Neville; I was going to advise you, after you had spent a month at Harrowgate, to go to some place on the coast and have a couple of months' bathing to strengthen your ankle after the accident."

"A month at Harrowgate, and two months at the sea!" she exclaimed: "three months away! how coolly you talk! I won't go near the sea;—I want no bathing;—my ankle is perfectly strong;—I'll stay at Sunville among my people;—*they* do not wish to get rid of me;—to them, thank God! I can be a blessing."

In her rage at his manifest indifference to her she was on the point of betraying herself.

Maria sat petrified; Dr Campbell laboured hard to suppress a smile, and was partially successful; and Miss Cope, presuming a little on being in Miss Neville's confidence, laid her hand on her arm and said,—

"My dear Miss Neville, Dr Campbell does not know of the

benevolent schemes that your heart is set on executing ; he thinks health the first object, of course ; but ” (turning to Campbell) “ my friend, as she allows me to call her, is so absorbed in the welfare of others that she forgets private interests ; but perhaps you will not urge her to go to a bathing-place if she says she is quite strong. ’

She secretly pressed Miss Neville’s hand, endeavouring to recall her to herself.

Certainly in the present case she was useful ; the short time occupied by her speech served to calm the young lady, and make her half ashamed of her excitement.

“ Oh no, Miss Cope,” said Campbell coldly ; “ if Miss Neville feels her ankle as strong as ever why should I urge her to go ? perhaps I should not have volunteered my advice without being asked for it.”

“ I was afraid,” said Miss Neville, slightly abashed, “ that you would have insisted on the necessity of my going ; and it would have been such a disappointment to all those poor people if I had run away from them just at harvest-time, that I got quite nervous ; indeed, bathing does not agree with me ; I never was so well as since I came here.”

“ Then I suppose you cannot do better than continue here,” said Campbell, rising.

“ Where are you going ? ” said she : “ pray stay and dine ; we expect Mr and Mrs Parker, intimate friends of ours ; they are coming to pass some days with us ; he is a very pleasant man, and she sings charmingly ; an old schoolfellow of mine.”

“ Impossible, Miss Neville ; I am engaged to spend the evening at the Vicarage.”

“ But you can go there any other evening, and you will not often meet with such agreeable people as the Parkers.”

“ This is little Miss Davenport’s birthday, and there is to be quite a feast ; the dear child came herself to my cottage this morning with her papa to invite me ; I would not for the world disappoint her.”

“ Oh ! very well ; when ‘ the world ’ is put into the balance, I know matters are hopeless. You seem amazingly fond of children.”

“ Indeed I am ; are not you ? ”

“ I like them very well in their proper place.”

“ That is,” observed Maria, “ you like them in a nursery at

the top of the house, with the door locked, to keep the little dears in 'their proper place.'"

"The infant state is deeply interesting," whimpered Miss Cope, and Campbell, having agreed with her, took his leave.

There was silence a few minutes after his departure ; then Miss Neville said, half to herself,—

"To drive us off to Harrowgate, and then to the sea-side, without a moment's notice!"

"Drive us!" echoed Maria ; "as if he was a drover, and we a set of cows ! The poor man was sent for, and he ordered what he thought the best remedy. And I dare say he will allow us two days to prepare ; you can write him another note to-morrow, bidding him come here and tell us what packing-time he can possibly permit."

"You may taunt me as much as you like, but I will get advice for mamma whenever she requires it."

"You make the most laudable exertions to get her a doctor, I allow ; but it is surprising how lukewarm you grow if you do not relish the prescription," answered Maria.

"I deny being lukewarm," cried Miss Neville, angrily ; "I wish her much to go to Harrowgate, if she requires it ; and I dare say you, and Letty Cope too, will have no objection to accompany her. I will remain at home."

"All alone?"

"Yes, all alone. I stand in my father's place, to administer his property with reference to the advantage of others as well as of myself. My situation may be a conspicuous and painful one, but it has been laid on me by circumstances beyond my control. It remains for me to do my duty, as far as my feeble powers and the disadvantages of my sex will permit. I cannot be a 'bread-and-butter' miss, hanging on the arm of mamma, and simpering about the ball-room looking for 'promotion.' I have an independent existence, a personality of my own, that sets me completely apart from the usual title of 'one of Mrs So-and-so's daughters.' I have a responsibility on my mind, not, I repeat, chosen by myself,—a part to perform among the landlords of England." She sat erect, and looked sternly at her sister. For a moment she forgot Dr Campbell in the contemplation of those duties, the necessity of performing which she had forced upon herself for the sake of remaining near him, but which, now when

she had begun to reason about them, had assumed a vitality and an authority of their own that kindled up all the better part of her nature.

"Sublime!" exclaimed Maria, with a sneer.

Miss Neville eyed her scornfully, and said nothing. Maria continued:—

"I will gladly go to Harrowgate with mamma, if she desires it. I'm sure it will be a relief to get away from that doctor for a few weeks, he is so disagreeable."

"Just because you made a blunder about a Greek word, and are always choosing learned terms that you don't understand; 'my word,' after all, was the right word for a lady."

"I did not know there was a language a-piece for men and women. I don't want to learn *his* language, until he can teach it with less sarcasm."

This dialogue was happily interrupted by the entrance of the heroine of the day.

"Well, mamma?" said Maria, looking inquiringly at her.

"Well, my dear?" answered her mother.

"Why, of course, I want to know how you feel now."

"Pooh! child, I'm very well."

"How soon Dr Campbell cured you!"

"I was much better before he arrived; I did not want him at all, but Alicia seemed so very unhappy about me, that I consented to have him, just to please her."

"Mamma," interrupted Miss Neville, "did he tell you you ought to go to Harrowgate?"

"To Harrowgate! no, indeed; why do you ask?"

"Because he desired us to take you there."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Mrs Neville. "Such a pother about nothing I never heard; he may bid me go there if he chooses, but, I can promise you, I won't mind him; if I were ill even, it is a place I dislike. I was there with your poor father; he mistook his disease, and fancied the chalybeate springs there would cure him; on the whole, I hate the thoughts of it; Cheltenham agrees best with me, but, thank God! I don't require any waters at present; I will, however, take the medicines Dr Campbell prescribed for me, as I dare say they will be useful. Come, what have I to do now? Yes; I must go and see that their apartments are in perfect order for the Parkers;—I desired Sabina to

bring in a choice bouquet for Mrs P.'s dressing-room, and I will help her to arrange it in the vases." Having so said, she trotted out of the room.

Miss Neville drew a long breath, apparently much relieved by the annihilation of the Harrowgate scheme.

"What a tiresome day we have spent! Letty Cope, will you come and breathe the fresh air with me?"

They strolled along by the irrigation.

"What do you think of him now?" asked Miss Neville.

"I think he is very anxious that you should all be made strong and well," answered Miss Cope.

"He ordered me away for three months; there is nothing very fervent in that."

"Indeed, he seems to be so solicitous for your health that he would make any sacrifice to obtain it: positively I saw his lip quivering after he thought it his duty to speak of Harrowgate." (Campbell had been torturing away the troublesome smile that Miss Neville's wrath had provoked.)

"Letty Cope, are you or are you not fancying all these things?"

"My judgment is considered very good; I have but little fancy."

"Letty Cope! the time is past for windy words;—something must be done."

"Oh, goodness! what would you do?"

"How amazed you are! how long do you think I can tolerate the situation I am in? I must discover his sentiments with regard to me. You say timidity alone prevents him from declaring himself, but you won't give me your reasons for thinking so. Maria is so insulting, and he is so impenetrable, and you are so vague, and mamma is so superficial and empty, that I am nearly driven to madness. I would do anything to relieve myself from my present horrible condition. Pride! under foot with pride! If he does not wish to share my fortune he *shall* say so, and I will spend the rest of my life in endeavouring to do all the good I can to those whom Providence has placed under me. Letty Cope, don't you think I should conquer fastidious feelings for the good of those about me?"

"Oh! I hardly understand you," cried Miss Cope, trembling.

"Why, by bringing matters to a crisis, and honestly asking

him—whether he is really wishing—don't pretend to be so stupid !”

“Suppose you gave up the idea of him ?” whispered Miss Cope, timidly.

“No, no, I cannot, when perhaps, as you think yourself, he may be waiting for one word from me.”

“There will be so many at your feet far beyond him,” said Miss Cope again.

“That is as I think—as I think. No ; there is none with whom I could be so happy ; none whom I could worship like him. And to lose all for want of an effort ! I am an extensive landed proprietor ;—I am not in the subordinate position of other women, and I have a right to act in a more independent manner than they. He will not wonder, Letty Cope : he knows my disposition, and he seems rather to admire it. I will dazzle him with my glory, and then lay it all at his feet. Now I am like a wretch lying on a rock of diamonds, with the wellsprings of life gliding a little beneath his lips.”

“I am sure you will do nothing beneath your rank and dignity,” murmured Miss Cope.

“No, I will not, my good Cope ; the course I have fixed on is reasonable ; remember I do not stand in the position of other women ; I enjoy something of a man's power of free action. Come, let us go in and prepare to receive the Parkers.”

Miss Neville's plan was not a very intricate nor roundabout one. She would simply and without any ambiguity lay her vast earthly possessions at the feet of the “dispensary doctor.” She had, as we have just seen, succeeded in persuading herself that this was the most natural thing possible for her to do in her remarkable situation,—not forward nor indelicate, considering the immense distance between her and him, a distance that she took for granted he considered so great that he never would have the courage to bridge over the chasm by any effort of his own. But she would show him that there was no chasm wide enough to separate two hearts that were yearning towards one another ; nay, she would widen the gap as far as it was possible to stretch it, and then astonish and confound him by extending her hand and gently drawing him over.

In short, she settled that she would give a magnificent entertainment in some shape or another, and would spare no expense to

make it more brilliant and superb than anything that had been seen in that country before. The abundance of her wealth should be exhibited at it in the most unsparing manner ; nature and art should unite their marvels to make it equal to Calypso's island or Armida's garden ; all the nobility and gentry for twenty miles round should be invited to behold, enjoy, and wonder—to envy a lucky man, whoever he was, that should some day find ready to his hand all that so many thousands toil, intrigue, and waste their lives to obtain, without success. In the most glowing moment of this brief period of enchantment she would take one of the many opportunities that these vast assemblages afford, to whisper to the chosen of her soul that everything he beheld was his,—or something to that effect : the exact terms were not fixed on yet, but the offer was to be definite. On that day everything was to end between them, or a new life of celestial bliss was to commence. Would he not be intoxicated ? If love had never existed in his heart before, would it not spring up full-grown and strong when the goddess of that Olympus revealed to him that she scorned all the candidates who thronged around her and fought for her favours, throwing her happiness, her possessions, and herself into his lap ?

Alas ! and was it come to this,—that her warm and loving heart should be reduced to such an expedient ? That she should claim the privilege of wealth as a ground for unsexing herself ; that she should seek to win by confounding and dazzling the object of her pursuit, and be satisfied if she could inebriate him into acquiescence ? Did she fondly hope that, if she stepped forward in the character of a man, the proud Campbell would fall back into the position of the female, and blushing suffer himself to be tenderly wooed, and triumphantly won ? And was this the road to solid and lasting happiness ? No, she would have once said ; but now, blinded by a passion that still seemed to be met with coldness, every feeling was perverted ; and rather than yield to despair, she satisfied herself with the last hope that, if she built a temple round her god, and bowed down to it, that god might condescend graciously to accept her homage.

As to her mother and sister, if they felt disinclined to her entertainment, they had their remedy. They might go to Harrogate, according to advice, and leave her and her friend Mrs Parker together ; or, if they wished to fly still farther from the rout, they might go to Jericho. Sunville belonged to her, and

she would do as she chose in her own house. The estate in Hampshire was Maria's, and she never interfered there. So, in fact, Maria would have two havens to fly to—Harrowgate, and her own place, Falcontowers—if she was too wise or too quiet for the total *bouleversement* that was going to take place in the household.

In the evening, while Mr James and Mr Parker were at their wine (the former gentleman being generally summoned to act as master of the feast when any of the male sex were guests at Sunville), Miss Neville gave Mrs Parker an account of the numerous families in the neighbourhood who had entertained her and her mother and sister since their arrival among them, and expressed her intention of making a general return for all their civilities on some grand scale suited to her fortune.

Mrs Parker, who was young, gay, and without children, entered readily into any scheme of pleasure. Maria could not object to return compliments received ; and Mrs Neville declared the young people had her consent to do anything they pleased, provided they did not ask her to go to Harrowgate. The form which the hospitality was to take was then eagerly discussed. A *déjeûner* on the lawn, with marquees, music, &c., wound up by a ball in the evening, was proposed ; but Miss Neville did not like that, she did not want to have the affair going on the whole day, —Campbell could be managed in five or six hours as well as in twelve : it should be all in the house, where the glory could be compressed and intensified within a smaller space, in the which he was to be blinded, overpowered, and led captive.

"No, no, my dear Janet, I am to have a harvest-home, and all sorts of rustic amusements in the open air, a few weeks hence, and that will be quite enough of outdoor work in this uncertain climate ; strike out something else."

"Well, a fancy ball ; what would you say to that, Alicia ?"

The proposal pleased Miss Neville ; this would afford her an opportunity of presenting a *coup d'œil* of the most brilliant character. Heroes, chieftains, kings, in their various gorgeous costumes, were immediately conjured up, all passing before her and sighing for a gracious look, while she, magnificently arrayed as Juno, with a coronet of diamonds on her brow, would turn coldly from them all, and, marking out the quiet, solitary man, in the dark, simple habiliments of his profession (for she instinctively felt he would not go in any character), she would whisper

to him that he was the only star in that crowd of planets with their borrowed light; that he was the only genuine, really intelligible page to her, amidst those swarming volumes of tawdry, gilded fiction.

"Oh, capital, Janet! just the thing that I should like; this is fixed upon." And she looked at her sister.

Maria made no objection; in fact, a fancy ball was rather to the taste of her poetico-artificial mind.

"Now, Janet," continued Miss Neville, "you must promise not to stir from this until it is all over. You said in your letter that you were coming for a week only, but that is mere nonsense."

"I should like it of all things," answered Mrs Parker, "but William says he must be at Lakeview by the first of September for partridge-shooting,—he has promised."

"Pooh! he may wait a few days; and besides, he can have some capital angling here; my steward shall take him to a first-rate trout-stream to-morrow."

When the two gentlemen came into the drawing-room the whole affair was communicated to them; and as to partridge-shooting, how could such an excuse stand for a moment before an imperious heiress in the foreground, and a fine trout-stream, a fancy ball, Juno and a tiara of diamonds, held up in perspective?

Miss Neville got into high spirits; it was a great matter that the Parkers had consented to remain; she wanted Janet to support her against Maria's grumblings, for she fully expected an insurrection on the part of her sister when she saw the house thronged with decorators and upholsterers, to say nothing of the clang of the carpenter's hammer, which would confuse her at her German, and torment her at the piano, but which must go on incessantly for nearly a fortnight.

"So you are to be Juno, Miss Neville? not quite tall enough, I should say,—eh?" remarked Mr Parker.

"Oh, I will make it up in dignity," said she, smiling and tossing her head.

"Dignity and high heels will work wonders," observed Maria.

"I think I should make a very good Alcibiades," said Mr Parker, who was a small dapper man, not at all inclined to distress his friends by the low estimation in which he held himself. Then turning to Mr James, he said,—“And pray, sir, whom do you intend to call up from the grave, and endue with second life?”

Poor Mr James, in a special light-coloured waistcoat, a white

cravat tied most primitively, a thick chain and three big seals hanging perpendicularly from his fob, his hair cropped very close, and a diamond pin in the breast of his shirt, seemed to be in full character already.

"Nay," answered he, "I am too old for figurantes and fandangos; if the ladies will accept me I will appear much as I am now."

"It will certainly answer perfectly well," said Maria.

"As to my little woman," said Mr Parker, "I'll engage for her that she will perform the part of three or four different personages, and will be skipping to her room every two hours to change her dress. I must prepare to sell out of the funds to meet the expense of the various costumes;—but I warn you, my lady, I will not allow you to play the sailor as you did last Christmas at—"

"Now hold your tongue, William," cried she, playfully putting her hand on his mouth.

"You should see her dressed up like a tar, and singing one of Dibdin's sea-songs," said Mr Parker to the Nevilles, evidently very proud of the versatility of his wife's talents. "But, Miss Neville," added he, suddenly, "if you are to be Juno, what happy man will you elect to be your Jupiter?"

She coloured to a degree that surprised every one, but she tried to laugh, and said,—

"Oh, I shall dispense with that troublesome appendage; besides, to play it properly we should be fighting all the evening, and that would be bad fun."

"But when this Juno is never without the cestus of Venus," said Mr James, bowing low to her, "her Jove can never be in any state but one of fascination."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried Mr Parker: "famous, I vow! Mr James, you should go as a Euphuist of Queen Bess's times. Well, Miss Neville, we will suppose Jove absent on Mount Ida, chasing the nymphs, and you shall wield the thunder yourself."

The next morning Miss Neville and Mrs Parker commenced active preparations: the latter, with Maria's help, wrote a perfect snow-shower of invitations, a fortnight's notice being given; while Miss Neville, on her part, sent dispatches to some of her tradesmen in London, describing the sort of entertainment she proposed to give, and ordering them to send men and decorations, and everything necessary for bringing her intentions into full effect.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MYSTERIES OF LOVE.

Quidquid habes, age,
 Depone tutis auribus—Ah, . . .
 Quanta laboras in Charybdi!—HORACE, Ode 27, b. 1.

AFTER a few days, when the invitations had been discharged in all directions, nothing was spoken of in the neighbourhood but the grand fancy ball that the heiresses of Sunville were about to give. Every one the Nevilles were acquainted with was invited, and many families were requested to bring with them any friends they pleased, for such affairs are a failure if not numerously attended. Sunville House, meantime, was turned topsy-turvy; Mrs Neville was surprised; Maria was scared, but neither of them got much satisfaction if they ventured to put a question respecting the extent of the changes to be made, and the amount of the sum to which Miss Neville intended to limit herself; so they were obliged to be content to obtain their daily knowledge by their daily observation.

Miss Neville went from room to room full of directions, but very uncommunicative. Mrs Parker skipped about along with her, enjoying everything; Mr Parker angled contemplatively in the morning, and in the evening praised his wife, insinuated many things very complimentary to himself, and sang what he called bass, with the ladies, in a manner that gave him infinite satisfaction.

Maria having been confined to her chamber for a day or two by a cold, on making her appearance again in the dining-room, was surprised to see a long piece of ground into which the windows of the apartment looked, enclosed by temporary walls of planks, with a roof in preparation. Through the middle of this enclosure a tremendous pit about seventy feet long and fifteen wide had been dug, and at present exhibited rather a repulsive appearance.

"For mercy's sake, mamma, what horrid thing is that?" she cried.

"'Pon my word I'm sure I cannot tell, my dear. Mrs Parker, will not you take some of your favourite white soup?"

Maria next looked at Mr Parker; she dared not apply to her sister, who sat up with her lips compressed, and the ominous stony expression in her eyes. Mr Parker responded directly to the mute appeal.

"Oh, Miss Maria, 'tis nothing but a little geological convulsion that took place while you were confined to your room; I am glad you did not feel the shock above-stairs—'twas but trifling, indeed; I have taken a note of the whole, and I think my paper will read out very nicely at the next meeting of the British Association."

Mrs Parker tittered, and Maria looked sulky and asked no more questions.

The next morning she went into the dining-room to see whether any progress had been made which might throw some light on the object of digging this hideous pit, and to her astonishment she saw that a great portion of the wall between the windows had been pulled down, and a grand arched entrance from the dining-room into the new enclosure was commencing its graceful span. The eyes of a dozen workmen fell on her as she advanced into the apartment. In truth it was "*apparet domus intus*," with a vengeance.

After a few moments she went up to one of the men, and asked him what all this meant, particularly the pit.

"Oh, ma'am, this pit will be a beautiful canal in a few days, or a small lake rather; we will line it first and then fill it with water. And the gentleman from London says there are to be pillars ranged along each side of the lake, and festoons of green leaves and flowers hanging from pillar to pillar, and coloured lamps mixed through them; and these walls of board are to be hung with scarlet stuff and lighted with lamps, and choice hexotics are to be brought from all the greenhouses and ranged here in grand style. He says that when it is finished there won't be its match in all England. The company are to come into it from the parlour through this archway, but there is to be a curtain across it at first until they are all collected together, and then it is to be raised, my Lady, quite sudden, to astonish the gentlefolks."

"Humph!" thought Maria; "one of them has been pretty well astonished already. And pray what use is to be made of the dining-room?"

"They're to dance in it, ma'am, and when they're tired they are to step in here to refresh themselves by the water's side among all the cool green plants. He says it will be as neat a job as ever he put out of hands."

"I dare say," thought Maria; "a nice piece of expense to cool people after their dancing."

Such an immense outlay for one night was certainly provoking, but Maria on her side was a little penurious in her tendencies, and not inclined to do anything in the style to which her fortune entitled her. She went into the drawing-room, where she found her sister and Mrs Parker. She could not attempt to remonstrate with Miss Neville for tearing down the parlour wall; the house was hers to pull down the whole if she pleased. It was frightful to think what that lake would cost, but it was not to be done with *her* money, and she guessed the answer she would receive if she hinted at the folly of such an undertaking. So she had to content herself with saying:—

"I should be glad to know where we are to dine to-day, Alicia."

"In the breakfast-room."

"Of course I don't care," replied Maria, "but really when one has friends in the house, to hunt them from place to place, and wedge them into nooks and holes, is too bad; I suppose Mr Parker will run away to Lake View to-morrow morning."

Mrs Parker fell into a fit of laughter.

"My dear Maria, he will be as comfortable as possible in the breakfast-room; do you think him such a giant as that he will not fit there? Why when I was going to be married they asked me whether I intended to keep him in my pencil-case; so, Alicia, he is sure not to run away as long as you have a pencil-case vacant for him."

But while Miss Neville is digging pits for Dr Campbell, and knocking down the wall of her house that he may walk serenely from one scene of enchantment to another,—does it occur to you, reader, that he may decline the invitation? He hated these tremendous routs, and moreover was resolved to estrange himself from Sunville since he could not succeed in dismissing the family to a watering-place; so what could be more likely than that he would refuse? Poor Miss Neville! It is really horrible to picture her situation in the event of such a disaster. However, Campbell did not refuse; it was not his intention to give up the

acquaintance of the family completely, and if he ever accepted of an invitation from them, this was the most desirable, for in such a large assembly as that he would probably not come in contact with Miss Neville for the whole evening; people of more consequence than he was would occupy her entire attention. As it was his duty, of course, to make a second visit to Mrs Neville, though he could not see that there was much the matter with her, he went to Sunville about a week before the ball was to come off, and noticed the immense preparations that were going on without any surprise; he thought that young ladies who had more money than they knew what to do with were employing it in a very usual manner. He could not see the volcanic heart that was boiling under that show of vanity and frivolity; he little dreamt of the utter scorn with which that ardent and impetuous woman surveyed each bauble as she piled it upon another; still expecting in her contradictory, unreasoning, feminine nature, that the effect of what she despised would produce the result for which her soul was pining;—that the mighty instrument which the world always wielded with so much success would not fail in her case, and that the Genius of Wealth, looking out from a thousand glittering creations, would overpower a mind that must be constituted in some measure like other minds, and make it adore her for all she offered, if not for all she was.

Mrs Neville was as well as possible and very busy, giving her daughter all the assistance she was able. Campbell sat for a short time in the drawing-room with the young ladies, and when he rose to depart Miss Neville asked him whether he had any friend whom he might wish to bring with him to her ball, as she would be happy to see him. He answered that he had not. She named his pupil Mr Edmund Bolton. Campbell knew that Edmund would give anything to go there, but he thanked the lady and said that his pupil could not leave his father, who was not as well as might be wished. He would not accept of any compliment from Miss Neville, and Edmund was consigned to the same limbo with poor Higgin. When he was gone Miss Neville returned to her workmen, and Mrs Parker fell into raptures with “the doctor.”

“A most beautiful, bewitching creature, Maria! there is an expression about his lips that I do so like! Oh no, I mean that I don’t like, for it is an expression that we women ought to say we do not approve of, however we may feel; you know, Miss Cope,

we are expected to keep up to a certain standard of innocence and purity, and persuade the men that we are angels, seeing nothing, feeling nothing, knowing nothing, whether we are married or single, old or young. Poor fellows! I wonder, though, whether they always believe us. But that insinuating wretch,—what a pair of eyes he has! saying a heap of things that he would not dare to put into mother English. I wonder how many women he has ruined; how many would you say, Miss Cope?"

"O mercy! Mrs Parker," murmured Miss Cope, sinking beneath the billows of her bashfulness.

"Really, Janet," cried Maria, "I am quite disgusted with you! Is that the manner in which a steady, proper matron should speak? What are we girls to think of marriage, if it entitles women to use such freedom of speech? As to this man, I can see nothing to be admired about him; he is either obstinately stupid, or insolently sarcastic."

"He sings charmingly," put in Miss Cope.

"Is it possible?" cried Mrs Parker. "Then, Maria, never ask him to sing before me, if you wish me to keep my fealty to my William unimpaired; just imagine him singing:—

'Come rest in my bosom, my own stricken deer.'

I desire you not to ask him to sing, for William's sake. A two-pair-of-stairs window—a three-pair—would not daunt me, with him at the bottom; out I'd fly!"

"And break your own neck and his back, and one of you at least would be very little loss; I do not say I mean you, Janet. There is no danger I will ask him to sing; I ask him to do nothing. Alicia strokes, and pets, and chirps to him, and the fellow arches his back sometimes, and does not seem to relish all the coaxing; but still I can promise you I am very uneasy."

"Ha, ha!" cried Mrs Parker, "is that the way the wind blows? and what on earth are you uneasy about? Why should not she marry him? What the deuce is the good of having a tremendous lot of money if one cannot procure some immense felicity with it? why, with a twentieth of her fortune she could feast on the best things to be had, wear the finest clothes, and have a nice equipage, a good house, and plenty of servants. There is a point at which those enjoyments, if multiplied any farther, become perfect bores, and then, what are you to do with all your surplus of wealth? would not any reasonable being think it the height of wisdom to employ it in making yourself happy with 'the poor man you

adore ?' Now, nature has done everything for this man, fortune only has forgotten him, but we will leave it to Alicia to refresh her memory, and the sooner she does so the better pleased I shall be."

"I don't care whom she marries," said Maria, "only it is revolting to see a woman persisting when a man takes her so coolly."

"Takes her so coolly !" repeated Mrs Parker; "you will not persuade me, I can assure you, that a man in his position could take her coolly. What do you say, Miss Cope?"

"He is not demonstrative," answered Miss Cope.

"Can't believe that such luck could come to his share," suggested Mrs Parker.

"Something in that way," rejoined Miss Cope.

Maria made no further remark, and Mrs Parker, having looked meditative for a short time, ran to the piano, and having dashed her hand along the keys for a few seconds, sang some verses in exceedingly rich and sweet tones. When she had finished she said to Maria :—

"There, this is a song I have just composed to your doctor, but Alicia is supposed to be the speaker, and I am going to show it to her, and give my full consent to the match."

She was cantering off, and Maria had great difficulty in detaining her.

"I intreat of you, Janet, not to mention to her one word of what I have been saying. I told you my suspicions merely, and if I thought you would have betrayed me I should never have opened my lips about the matter."

"Oh well, of course I will not let her know anything of our conversation," answered Mrs Parker, "but I may show her the verses I have written on Dr Campbell. I suppose I may admire him and write on him as much as I please, he is such a love of a man, with that mouth of his, and those insufferable eyes ; if he'd say the thing out plainly it would not be half so bad," and she bounded off, carrying her verses in her hand, which we shall not give at present as they are in rather an unfinished state.

When she left the room Miss Cope looked after her.

"Highly talented, but a little wild for a married woman."

"Yes," said Maria, "marriage goes a very short way in taming women, unless one gets a frightful tyrant of a husband, whereas that idiot William Parker humours her in everything. The real way in which nature means women to be subdued is by obliging them to bring forth a succession of children. She gives

them a superabundance of strength and spirits with this object, and if, from any cause, there is a failure, the unnecessary supply nearly drives them mad, as you see in the instance of that little humming-top that has just whirled off to make mischief. Depend upon it I am right : look at that wife of Mr Davenport's, how mild, and quiet, and meek-spirited she is ; you scarcely hear the sound of her voice."

"I am afraid," said Miss Cope, smiling, "that the demand on her spirits exceeded the supply."

"Yes, perhaps so ; Nature is not always perfectly just in her allotments, but in this case the fault is on the right side ; it is better to be a mope like Mrs Davenport, than a perfect nuisance like Mrs Parker."

The unconscious Mrs Parker, in the mean time, found Miss Neville, and having read the verses to her, and broken out into new raptures about "the doctor," she could plainly perceive by the ill-suppressed emotion of her friend that Maria's surmises were well grounded ; so she officiously resolved to do everything in her power to promote the wishes of her old schoolfellow. Her quick mind grasped the whole matter ; "the doctor" was too shy to propose, and Miss Neville too proud to make advances.

Sarah and Lucy Bolton had not of course received any invitation to Miss Neville's ball, as they did not visit at Sunville ; so their enjoyment on the occasion was confined to laughing at such anecdotes connected with the approaching festivity as Edmund was enabled to tell them.

"Well," said the brother one morning to his sisters, "I hope the characters at this fancy ball will perform their part as well as Mr Davenport is now doing himself, in all the spasms of a perplexed parson."

"What new trouble is he in ? is he going to the ball ?" asked Sarah.

"That is the whole point in question, answered Edmund. "He and Mrs Davenport have got an invitation, but the name of a 'fancy ball' is startling ; he is terribly afraid a clergyman ought not to be seen there, but he is longing above measure to go, and he has made some excuse for not sending an answer until two or three days have passed, during which he is to weigh the pros and cons, and is to endeavour to come to some terms with

his conscience, which is now making very fierce resistance to his attacks on her virtue."

"She will capitulate," said Sarah.

"He is trying to blind her at present," continued Edmund. "His wife has been low-spirited since her late illness, and Mr Warner, when he was here, observed that she was moped to death, and if she was not taken a little into company she would become insane; so Mr Davenport insists that it is his duty to go there on her account, however painful it may be to himself. He also argues that at such places people have a tendency to deviate into a certain license of speech and action, if not kept in awe by the presence of censors, and guardians of morals; and that if he does go, it will merely be as an ecclesiastical policeman, to act as a check on his parishioners, 'among them, but not of them.' In fact, such a flood of advantages to the cause of virtue and propriety burst on him as he took this view of the case, that he put on a most solemn face, and said, 'Much as I dislike it, I am afraid I must go on principle.'"

The conversation was here interrupted by a loud ringing at the hall-door bell, and immediately afterwards a note, with a coronet on the seal, was handed to Sarah. She opened it and read as follows:—

"MY DEAR MISS BOLTON,

"I hope your dear father has recovered his usual health, though I am apprehensive he has not, otherwise I am persuaded you would have performed your promise made to my poor daughter, that you would come and spend some days with her. Be assured your company was never so much desired by her as it is now; she has been growing worse every day since she called on you; scarcely ever leaves her bed, and eats nothing—absolutely nothing. You will no doubt say, 'Why not send for Dr Campbell?' Well, my dear young friend, here is an enigma;—she will not listen to my offer of bringing him to her,—gets into a fever if he is mentioned, and my son has forbidden my ever naming him to her again. Dr Campbell, on his side, never comes near the house, so what am I to think? Have they quarrelled? But you will say, 'Why should they quarrel?' That is a subject on which many thoughts and suspicions cross my mind, more than I care to commit to paper, but I will talk it over with you when we meet, for I have full confidence that you

will not disappoint us except my friend is ill and cannot dispense with you. The carriage shall be at your service every day to visit your father, and perhaps Caroline may be induced to accompany you ;—for she says if you come she will eat ;—if you come she will get up ;—in fact it appears that you are to stand in Campbell's shoes. Indeed, my dear Miss Bolton, the more I see of girls, the more inexplicable I find them ; no sooner do I generalize on their conduct of yesterday than their conduct of to-day disperses all my conclusions to the wind. Allow me to add, that you form an exception, a decided exception, to these 'Cynthias of the minute'—(Pope, I fancy) ; and happy the man who could place such a jewel in his coronet.

"Believe me ever yours most faithfully,

"NORTHWOOD.

"P.S.—I have written to London, to my skilful friend, Dr ———, begging of him to come down directly, and make a full examination of my daughter's case ; I expect him the day after to-morrow at furthest, and wish much to have you with her while he is here."

These solicitations, joined to the delicate piece of flattery, were irresistible, and as Mr Bolton was now pretty well, and as Edmund promised to leave him as little as possible, Sarah answered the Earl's note by saying that she would go to Northwood Abbey the next day. Accordingly the carriage came for her, and conveyed her thither.

She found Lady Caroline dressed, and lying on a sofa in her room, anxiously awaiting her arrival. They embraced, and Caroline, after a little general conversation, in floods of tears revealed the secret that was undermining her health and spirits. Sarah listened without surprise, for it was only what she expected, —and without any expression of disapprobation, for she felt that would be as unbecoming on her part as it would be useless to her friend.

Poor Caroline was overwhelmed with joy at the manner in which Sarah received this humiliating confession ; nay, the passion seemed to have lost half of its undignified character by the great composure of the listener. From her knowledge of Sarah's rigid opinions on all subjects connected with women's self-respect

and pride, she was prepared for a burst of astonishment, and a host of upbraidings; to be reminded of rank, dignity, high feelings, and the whole train of concomitants which her own heart had often told her turned her love into a shame and a reproach. But she heard none of these things; words of sympathy, guarded but kind, gave an immense relief to her weak and overburdened heart. She kept her face concealed on Sarah's neck as she whispered:—

"I am not thinking of marriage; that, I know, is out of the question; but oh, Sarah! it would be the greatest comfort to me if I thought there was a possibility that he was not going to be married to this Miss Neville."

Sarah wished heartily that he was; it would be the best thing that could happen for Caroline. However, as she knew he was not, it would be unfair and wrong to permit the error to continue. She answered:—

"As to that report, I think I can say confidently that it is false. Neither my brother, nor any one I know, ever heard that such a thing was dreamt of. I will ask Edmund, if you wish, whether he has any suspicion of it."

"Oh do, dear Sarah, but not so as to let him imagine that I—"

"Of course," answered Sarah.

Caroline remained quiet for a while; she was exhausted by what she had gone through.

Sarah left her to herself, and began to meditate on the next step to be taken. She saw her friend so prostrated that she abstained for the present from asking her any questions respecting her future resolutions;—*her* resolutions, indeed! what would they be the first time Campbell presented himself again before her? The Earl must be told all, and Caroline must be taken out of the country; this, Sarah was convinced, was the sole remedy that would be in any degree efficacious. But would Caroline ever consent to let her father be told the humiliating secret? And what could she (Sarah) say to Lord Northwood when, as she anticipated, he should consult her on his daughter's situation, and disclose the suspicions which, it was evident by his letter, he had conceived? Her situation was a painful and intricate one, but she had prudence, and judgment, and coolness enough to carry her through many difficulties. She resolved to do nothing until the London physician arrived, who, by delivering his opinion on Lady Caroline's case, would probably supply some basis of ac-

tion, and by announcing, perhaps, that her life was in danger, would render fidelity to the daughter treason to the father, and make further concealment nothing better than a crime.

Lady Caroline was so thoroughly relieved by Sarah's assurances that Dr Campbell had no idea of marriage, that she actually dressed and came down to dinner with her friend. Wan, wasted, and weak, she looked, certainly; but the reaction had raised her spirits unnaturally. Her father was astonished and delighted. Miss Bolton was hailed as an enchantress—a Medea who, however, was using her power for the most benevolent objects alone.

Lord Fitzarthur was puzzled; he had solved many propositions in mathematics, but the riddle of a woman's heart was beyond his power to read. She had turned against Campbell just at the time when he thought there was the least hope of her giving him up, and the fascinating influence seemed to be transferred to Miss Bolton—a woman! Well, it was strange, but she was safe as long as this vagary lasted. Revolving time had brought to Turnus what none of the gods would have dared to promise him; but Turnus's mind was not easy about her; there were two bright spots on her cheeks; her laughter was hysterics, not mirth; she spoke rapidly, and ate nothing.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DOCTOR IN THE DRESSING-ROOM.

“Virtue ebbs, and reason errs,
Too fondly gazing on that grief of hers!

By this how many lose not earth but heaven.”—BYRON.

THE day of the fancy ball was now arrived. By the most strenuous exertions Miss Neville succeeded in having everything ready against the appointed time, although it would have taken a full month of ordinary labour to execute the plan which she had conceived in half an hour. The workmen toiled half the night for a week, but that of course was no matter; to do her

justice, however, she paid them handsomely. During the three last days Charles Routledge had been at Sunville from breakfast-time until after supper, assisting in every possible way, not only with his taste and suggestions, but with all the bodily labour of which his strength was capable, and he was so obliging and intelligent that Miss Neville found him quite invaluable, and declared that she would have been behind the time but for him. In return for his devoted attention, she graciously consented that he should come to the ball in the character of Mercury, and be peculiarly on her staff, going all her messages, and awaiting her royal behest in every way that could accommodate her ;—a distinction that flattered him extremely.

In the mean time Mr Davenport had come to very amicable terms with his conscience. He settled that the reason those large evening entertainments had the name of being more dissipated than dinners, was exactly because clergymen shunned them as if they were gin-palaces, and thus left people who were neither steady nor religious to shape and order them according to their own wicked will, uncurbed by the authority and unchecked by the presence of any serious character. He insisted that there would be an immense reform effected in the tone of balls and routs if clergymen would appear there for a short time ; express their disapprobation of waltzing, look sternly on any excess of levity, and at the same time encourage innocent enjoyment. He resolved that he would come away before supper, and advise as many of his friends as possible to do the same. So conscience expressed herself satisfied. He engaged a fly for himself and Mrs Davenport, and as there was plenty of room to spare, Dr Campbell was invited to accompany them, and willingly consented.

He arrived at the Vicarage at the time appointed, and found Davenport sitting in the parlour, in the full dress of a clergyman ; we do not mean of course the gown, cassock, bands, and tippet, which is a very graceful though sombre costume, but the tight black body coat, black trowsers, and ghastly white cravat, unrelieved by even the quietest colour, which make the priest—the announcer of “good news”—look more like an undertaker or a bird of ill omen, than the messenger of peace and good-will towards men. However, Mr Davenport made the most of what he was doomed to wear ; his clothes were of the finest materials, and fitted his noble figure to perfection. Dr Campbell was also

in his full dress, equally dark and dismal but more appropriate perhaps to his profession ; he wore moreover a black neck-tie of figured satin, for nothing could ever induce him to put on a white cravat, which he abhorred. His hair was dressed with peculiar care, in fact it was slightly curled, just enough to prevent it from looking wild, and it certainly became him vastly. Davenport's curled naturally, so he had no trouble with it, which he would have by no means spared had it been necessary.

"Oh, I am glad you are come in such good time, Campbell," cried Davenport ; "that woman of mine threatens not to go ; our second girl is feverish and cannot sleep, and the mother of course is frightened ; pray go up and doctor the child and scold Mrs D., and manage to have things your own way as you always do."

"If the child is ill, I must remain here and help her to nurse it," said Campbell.

"The devil you must!" exclaimed Davenport, looking dismayed ; "why then I must stay at home too ; how could I march off to a ball by myself with no one to take, and no excuse ? that is, I mean, it would look too pointed if I were to go alone ; I should look too much as if I were going professionally, to spy and censure ; of course my chief object is to be useful, but I should succeed better by acting indirectly."

"Bless you, hold your tongue," cried Campbell laughing ; "do you think you can humbug me by these made speeches ? I'll go up and see what state matters are in."

"Do, do, my dear fellow, and tell her she must come."

He went to the nursery first, examined the child, called for the medicine-chest which he always kept in the house, and gave it a powder. He then went to the dressing-room, knocked at the door, and was admitted. Milly was standing in the middle of the room in full dress ; the woman who had been assisting her was dismissed. She wore a magnificent dress of lace over blue satin, and looped up with silver wheatears and blue roses ; on her head was a turban of blue gauze shot with silver, and waving with white feathers ; on her neck was a superb diamond neck-lace, with bracelets of the same on her exquisite arms, and earrings to match. These jewels were a late addition to her casket, for indeed her father had brought them to her on his recent visit : he had purchased them for Mrs Warner not long after his marriage, and she had worn them but once or twice when she became an invalid.

When Amelia was married, her father was so discontented with her "wretched match" that he determined she should never have the diamonds, but that he would lay them by for the future wife of Tom Warner, who was to be his heir. So they were locked up for many a year; but the young man showed no inclination to marry, and Mr Warner became mollified and reconciled to his daughter's lot, and finally, in a generous moment, the night before he set out for Northwood, he packed them up, and bestowed them on his daughter with as good a grace as he was capable of. Mr Davenport was delighted with the sumptuous gift, only he feared she never would have an opportunity of wearing it; and he hailed this unexpected gala as little less than a godsend, which afforded him such a happy occasion for exhibiting his wife in all her beauty and all her glory of attire.

Campbell, who had never seen Milly in full dress before, looked rapturously at her, and yet her eye could detect through all a shade of disapprobation in his face. She smiled.

"I see, Robert, that you are not pleased with these diamonds that papa has lately given me, and I know they do not suit a clergyman's wife, though I might wear them as Mr Warner's daughter; but when I reminded Arthur of this he was hurt, as if I were intimating I had fallen by marrying him; so I resolved to wear them and go to the ball, though Katie is ill and I am uneasy at leaving her."

"I assure you I was not thinking of those ornaments; they are very pretty, though. Too good for you indeed! Can anything be too good for that neck? Take off the necklace, however."

"And what will Arthur say?"

"He will say nothing, for you shall put it on again."

She took it off trembling, and he gazed almost wildly on the unadorned magnificence of that breast as it heaved with her quickened respiration. At last he spoke:—

"It is a long time since I saw you in such a low dress as that; not since I dined last at Warner Park. How well I remember it! It was about three weeks before I was sent out of the country like a disgraced person. You wore a pretty green muslin dress with long sleeves and a low body, and a white muslin apron embroidered in green worsted of different shades,—your own work, you told me. After dinner, when our fathers were at their wine, we went to walk in the garden; the weather

was delightful, but as your neck was bare you took off your apron and made a little kerchief of it. One of your maids who was coming from the bleach-green saw you, and she ran upstairs and brought you down a shawl, on receiving which you pulled off the apron and threw it into a currant bush. I was bent on possessing myself of it, so when in our rounds we next passed the bush I seized it and stuffed it into my pocket. Milly, I have it still. I took it with me to London, and many a night after I had finished my revolting but necessary studies and dissections, I took it from the drawer, unfolded and spread it out before me, and gazed on it until I was soothed and purified. I thought of the priceless treasure that it once covered, and that I fondly flattered myself was to be reserved sacred to me. But this sounds like reproach, and that I am far from intending. I took the apron with me to Belgium, Paris, Greece, everywhere I went in short, and I have it now at Cypress Cottage, and it is to be my face-cloth when I am confined ; I have left written directions about it."

She burst into tears.

"Nay, my Milly, I did not mean to make you cry ; that is a bad preparation for this festive evening."

"Oh, how can I do otherwise when you speak in such a manner ?" she said.

"A flood of recollections came over me in consequence of your change of dress, and I ran on without considering. Pardon me, my treasure !"

"I remember that evening so well, too," she replied. "I did not think of my apron until the next morning, and when I went to look for it it was gone ; and the housekeeper scolded me for losing it just after I had spent so much time on it. But it seems it was not lost ; it was more worthily bestowed than it deserved to be."

"We will talk no more of the past now, Milly," said he, alarmed at her red eyes and unhappy countenance ; "hasten and finish your dressing ;" and, not exactly suiting the action to the word, he took off her turban.

"What are you doing ?" she exclaimed.

"You shan't wear this : you look like an old dowager in it ; according to the ladies' plan you hide your superb hair in a muffler, and place a bird's feathers on the top of your head, as a worthy substitute for it. A bird with handsome feathers is a fine

object, but a woman with beautiful curling hair is a much finer one. It was that outlandish 'triumph of millinery,' as I suppose some would call it, that displeased me, when you thought I was condemning those trinkets as too good for you. Call your maid, and let her dress your hair any way you please, and I will go down and tell your husband that you are getting ready, for he seemed afraid you had changed your mind."

"I was uneasy about Katie; but Arthur seemed so annoyed at my proposing to stay with her that I made up my mind to gratify him at all hazards."

"I have given her some medicine, and I dare say she is asleep now."

"Oh, my dear Robert, you are my life, and my guardian angel."

She threw her soft arms about him, laid her forehead on his shoulder, and wept again. Her heart would have burst if she had not yielded to this impulse, and poured out her feelings towards the man who was watching over her and hers, untiringly, unostentatiously, year after year; whom she had loved as she could love no other, but whom she had forgotten in an unguarded moment, under the fascination of Davenport's profession, face, and manners. Most of all was she pained and affected by his allusion to his death and his face-cloth; she felt as if there was something ominous in it. So she spoke not a word, but wept passionately.

Suddenly Davenport's voice came thundering from the hall: "Campbell, the carriage is at the door; what on earth keeps you? will she go or not? How is the child?"

Campbell went down-stairs.

"Don't make such a tremendous noise, Davenport!"

"Why? what? is the little girl worse? Mrs Davenport won't go, eh?"

"The child is better, and Mrs Davenport will be with you in a moment."

"Oh, that's my good fellow! you set everything to rights; there are times when I could never manage her without you."

Campbell began to walk about the parlour, and Davenport kept fidgeting in and out between that room and the hall. At length he lost all patience.

"Well, the time those women take to *tutivate* is unconscionable! But at any rate when she does come down she will be worth looking at; eh, Campbell?"

"You are an enviable man, I allow," said Campbell bitterly. "But," he added, "you need not be so impatient to set out, for you will get enough of it before it is over."

"Ay, but then we are not to stay to supper, and I must look about me and talk to my friends for a while, after being at the bore of dressing and going. You see it would not do for a clergyman to sit tippling wine till sunrise, and then drive home by daylight; and the sun rises so confoundedly early now. If I met any of my poor parishioners going to their daily labour when I was returning from a ball, would it not be awkward?"

"The sun is not so unmannerly as you think; he gives us law now until five o'clock, I believe," said Campbell.

"Egad, that's true; but they sup so plaguy late at those kind of affairs,—it would'n't do, no, it would not. But then you wish to stay, of course; I never recollected that; it would be hardly fair to drag you away, and make you play parson in spite of yourself. They say the tables will be a magnificent sight," he added, with a sigh. After a pause—"You are longing to remain for supper, to be sure; and it would be so selfish to destroy half your pleasure. If clergymen make bugbears of themselves they overshoot the mark, and do harm, so I—"

"Let me get in a word," cried Campbell, smiling. "I had much rather come home with you both, and am happy to have that excuse for getting away early."

"Now are you sure?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, that's a comfort," said Davenport, looking specially comfortless and disappointed; "to be a restraint on others is what I hate; I have ordered a snug savoury little supper to be ready for us at home about two; we shall be famishing by that time; and really when one has bargained for pleasure, starvation is a bad ingredient in it."

"Yes," said Campbell, "and you get no credit for it; the recorder is sure to put the pleasure on the debit side of the account, but he omits to balance it by starvation on the other."

Here Mrs Davenport entered the room.

Her tears were all washed away, and she was redolent of attar gul, and dressed in false smiles. Her hair was simply plaited on the back of her head, and in front it fell on each side of her face in rich curls. Round her brow she wore a wreath of blue

flowers with silver leaves. Campbell looked anxiously at her, and was glad to see her so composed.

"Tis time for you, my love," said the husband, scanning her, "but where is your turban."

"Dr. Campbell thought that I had better not wear it."

"Why, on earth?—what do you mean, Campbell?"

Campbell answered; "I never saw such a thing! it will give her a headache; a great gauze and metallic bird's nest, and an incubating bird in it, I suppose, for her tail is sticking up half a yard high in the air. What will you put on her next?"

"I never heard such stuff in all my life," cried the indignant spouse; "it is a beautiful head-dress, and I chose it myself from among a dozen others, and paid my good two pound ten, or three pound, I verily believe, for it. Heavy! it does not weigh three ounces."

"You desired me to go up-stairs and settle everything my own way, and I have done so," replied Campbell.

"I did not mean on the score of dress; it is her business to please me in that particular. Amelia, you cannot serve two masters, so chose between us both."

This was the sharpest thing Davenport had ever said, and Campbell saw that he must be put down immediately.

"Davenport, she strove to please you until she went within an inch of destruction, and if she had never minded me she would be dead now. Mrs Davenport, there is nothing antagonistic between the duty you owe your husband, and the necessity of following your physician's directions. Allow me to hand you to your carriage."

Davenport was subdued by being reminded of his rashness and obstinacy.

"Have it your own way to-night, but I promise you, Amelia, that you shall wear that head-dress the next time you go to a party."

When he was routed by Campbell from the field of present action, as he generally was, he always comforted himself by taking a strong position in the future.

Dr Campbell put Milly into the carriage and sat down beside her, leaving the opposite seat for the husband. The latter was annoyed at seeing his wife's dress crushed by the proximity of her companion, and he wished Campbell would sit by him and

leave her that side to herself; but he was afraid to say a word, and they drove off.

He soon recovered his good humour, and declared his wife looked much younger than if she had worn the head-dress.

"Of course she does; seven years younger," said Campbell.

"However," continued Davenport, "some people would say it is more interesting for a matron to look matronly, and not like a girl, particularly when she has six children."

"Children may set a woman off," answered Campbell, "but old looks never do. Depend upon it, the younger a woman seems the more she is thought of; and as long as she can look twenty or three and twenty, she is wise to do so."

Before they came near the house they could see it on its elevated site, blazing with a hundred lights, and looking like a great pharos. Davenport kept his head out of the window watching it, and calculating on the probable amount of enjoyment that such an enchanted palace was to afford. The other two bent their heads together, speaking low and gently to one another. At last they arrived.

They entered the hall; it was brilliantly lighted; the walls were hung with scarlet moreen decked with festoons and wreaths and crowns of ivy-leaves stitched together, interspersed with stars and other ornaments of a bright silver-coloured material, with coloured lamps at due intervals. In the middle of the hall was a metal stand on which stood a censer where frankincense was burning and diffusing a delicious odour over all the house. From the adjoining dancing-room pleasant sounds of music came floating on the air, as the members of the orchestra were whiling away the time with a pretty prelude or fantasy until the period arrived for their highest powers to be called into action. Davenport, thus welcomed through three of his senses at the very threshold, cast his eyes on all sides with an air of intense satisfaction. Campbell cared for none of these things; he was busy in arranging a lace scarf on Mrs Davenport's shoulders, much pleased to find she had brought such a thing with her, and that the vulgar gaze was not to feed on the glory of that unveiled neck. The hall and staircase were lined with servants, not one of whom stirred from his post; our party was waved and motioned from man to man, and as they ascended the stairs the Davenports heard their name shooting from mouth to mouth like a succession of popguns. Campbell was disgusted; he would not tell his

name; he had rather have turned back than have heard his poor patronymic (albeit it did link him with the house of the great Mac Callum More) rolling off the tongues of a dozen pampered footmen. So he who might ere morning call himself the master of all this magnificence, and of all these saucy menials—for the pleasure of discharging whom he would almost have accepted the yoke—was content to enter the house as the obscure follower of the vicar of Northwood.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FANCY BALL.

“Ring, joyous chords, ring out again!
A swifter still and a wilder strain!
But I met a dimly mournful glance,
In a sudden turn of the flying dance;
I heard the tone of a heavy sigh
In a pause of the thrilling melody!”—MRS HEMANS.

THE reception-room was above-stairs. It was a very large apartment, which had been the ball-room of old, when Mr Neville's mother had held her state in her ancient halls, but had not been used by the present family since their arrival until now. It was fitted up in superb style, with all the furniture of the drawing-room in it, and several additions besides. The sofas and chairs were covered with white velvet painted with coloured flowers, and three immense lustres, ablaze with wax-lights, hung from the ceiling. The finest and sweetest flowers of the season, the produce of many gardens besides those of Sunville, glowed in countless vases, and filled the room with a pure and refreshing odour, more agreeable than that of the costly incense which ever sent in a stream of its rival perfume, according as the door flew open to admit the thronging guests. Opposite to the entrance was a dais raised about a foot from the floor, covered with crimson velvet, and having a canopy of velvet lined with white satin suspended over it, the canopy being finished at the edges with a gold fringe a quarter of a yard deep. On this dais stood Miss

Neville, attired as Juno, receiving her guests. She wore a skirt of rose-coloured satin, sprigged all over with small gold "forget-me-nots," and trimmed round the bottom with gold crocuses. Her boddice was of blue satin, ornamented with gold, and the cestus of Venus encircled her waist. It was made of broad, white, watered ribbon, and was embroidered in coloured silks, and studded with stones of various hue and value, forming, on the whole, a most costly and attractive ornament. On her brow she wore the tiara; it was composed of diamonds and paste mixed, for had it been entirely of the precious gems it would have amounted to a price that majesty alone could compass. On the back of her head, classically arranged, floated a veil brilliant and light, wrought of the most delicate gold threads. Her fair hair was drawn in bands on each side of her face, and her whole air was noble, imperial, but feminine. Her face was flushed, and she looked gracious and animated, but a narrow observer might detect an anxious, uneasy look as she continually glanced towards the door. A small throne with a velvet cushion and gilded back, formed of twisted serpents, was placed behind her, but of course she never sat down. Two pretty boys, as pages, stood one on each side of the daïs; they were dressed in white cashmere, with facings of blue satin; they wore crimson scarfs put on in Highland fashion. Mrs Neville was seated on a couch near her daughter, conversing with some elderly ladies; she did not affect the turrets of Cybele, "the queen-mother," but was content with a white satin head-dress and feathers, which Campbell would no doubt have thought full good enough for her; and yet her pretty brown hair had but few white veins in it; it was neatly dressed in bands, and as the mother of the magnificent queen of the feast, she looked interesting. Behind Miss Neville stood a group of gentlemen, saying the most brilliant flattering things in their power, and endeavouring to catch her attention and make her smile. The room was already crowded with company.

When the door was thrown open to admit our party, Mr Davenport walked up to the daïs in towering majesty, with his beautiful wife on his arm, and followed closely by Campbell, who, however, was concealed from the view of Miss Neville by the pair in front of him. Davenport and his wife, as they advanced to salute Juno, attracted universal notice; he was without doubt a very remarkable-looking man, but Amelia became soon the sole centre of observation. The eyes of all the men were rivetted on

her face, and the eyes of all the women on her diamond necklace.

"It is not that she is so very handsome," whispered the latter, "but that she is so divinely dressed!"

"Pity that scarf and necklace conceal her adorable neck so much," thought the former.

Miss Neville, too, was quite dazzled when Mrs Davenport came close to her; she had seen her only two or three times, in the morning with her bonnet on, and she had no idea she was so beautiful. She was astonished too at the splendour of her jewels. She—only a vicar's wife! and yet none of the guests who had hitherto been introduced could show anything comparable to them. When they had made their obeisance to Juno, Davenport drew his wife a little aside, and Dr Campbell suddenly appeared before Miss Neville;

"And her world and all its glory
Was but framework to his face!"

She started, but recovered herself directly. He bowed, and a slight, peculiar smile curled his lips. It might have been courtesy! it might have been that there appeared something ludicrous to him in that mock queendom—in that magnificence and solemnity without just grounds, and that fictitious state in private life;—or—but we scarcely think it—a slight feeling of triumph might have arisen within him at the idea that all this wealth and grandeur and mock majesty might be his if he chose to ask for it. He did not attempt to extend his hand; he took for granted that the individuals composing that vast crowd had merely bowed and passed on. So it had been, indeed, in the case of all the others; but here it was different: she advanced to the edge of the dais, and, extending her bare and rounded arm (goddesses never wear gloves), offered him her jewelled hand. He raised his hand timidly, and, touching the tips of her fingers, stepped back. The knot of gentlemen in the rear looked critically at the man who had been honoured above all the rest. Some recognized him as the Northwood doctor, and wondered how a woman could be so carried away by mere good looks in a fellow who was earning his daily bread by—and they ran over in their mind some offices which a physician is at times compelled to perform—and who lived in a hut. Those who did not know who he was pronounced him a man of distinction—probably an Earl; who

else would be so differently treated from others, and who else would have the audacity to come to such a ball as that in a black necktie? Miss Neville was greatly damped by his coldness; she had been watching for him since the first knock, and had settled to ask him, after the salute was over, to come and stay by her while she was receiving her guests: he could not be placed on the dais, of course, but as near it as possible; she thought this attention could not fail to please and flatter him, and after he dropped her hand she was going to propose it to him, though he did look very reserved and distant; but at this instant two ladies sumptuously dressed, and led by a tall, stout man, with blazing red whiskers and a resolute air, swept up to the dais, and Campbell glanced aside to make way for them, and then fell back upon the Davenport. Mr Davenport was all animation, as he shot his quick glances in every direction.

"Bless me! what a crowd of fashionables! and they all seem to be enjoying themselves so much. These *réunions* are beneficial at times, they cement the bond of amity between a man and his neighbour; don't they, darling? Why, the whole world is here! there are the Granbys, that live twelve miles off: and the Whites, that hardly ever stir out; and the Perrys, that were to be off to Switzerland last week—they must have changed their plan on purpose to come here; and there are the Hugheses and six daughters; and—but stay—who is that standing near the bust of Fox? Why, positively that is Harry Thornhill, whom I thought in Ceylon! I hope he is not come home on sick leave; the last time I was at Thorn Hill his father said nothing about expecting him. Let me see; Campbell, what are you going to do with yourself?"

"Nothing."

"Well, it could not be less; you had better do something; will you take charge of this good woman for me, as I want to make my way to Harry Thornhill, and inquire about his health; he looks very thin; I hope he will not have to resign on account of the climate. Stay with her, my boy, for she knows scarcely any one here, and I will return as soon as I can."

Campbell took her quietly, and drew her arm within his; Davenport plunged into the crowd, and was seen immediately shaking hands with every second person he met. Campbell smiled.

"I did not think he knew so many people here."

"Nor I, I'm sure," said Milly; "I don't know one of them."

"He seems to be proceeding by such tedious stages to the grand object of his expedition, 'Harry Thornhill,'" continued Campbell, "that we cannot possibly stay here until his return. You could not be in a more inconvenient spot; the current of arrivals is setting from the door to that stand on which Miss Neville has perched herself, and it is passing so close to you that it will sweep you away. My poor dove, you are not accustomed to be mobbed by such a rookery."

"Indeed, I am no dove," answered Milly, "I am no better than a daw in borrowed feathers. These diamonds are so unsuited to a country clergyman's wife that I feel quite guilty and ashamed. I see and know that every one is staring at me."

"They are looking at you—at yourself—not at your ornaments. I will take you to a more retired part of the room."

He endeavoured to pierce with her through the crowd, and the people about them instinctively fell to each side, and made an avenue for them to pass through, gazing with admiration on Mrs Davenport. Scarcely any of the gentlemen knew who she was, but several recognized him, and wondered where the vengeance he had picked up that beautiful angel, who must be a person of high rank, too, with such diamonds on; the Earl of Northwood's daughter—this was the best solution they could think of; amazing that she should not have a more distinguished beau than he was; but still many of them strove to catch his eye, that they might nod to the man who had so lovely and high-born a personage under his special protection. But he looked at no one, steadily steering her through the billowy waves of this human sea, until he landed her at the very top of the room, as far as possible from the daïs (profanely called a stand lately), and they both sat down on a sofa to contemplate the scene.

Not more than half of the company had availed themselves of the invitation to come in character, having probably the sense to know that they would in all likelihood fail, and that failure in the attempt to execute a graceful trifle is particularly ridiculous and contemptible. In one respect, indeed, there was no lack of persons "in character," such as may be met with in all great assemblies. Many an unhappy person went as a merry one; all the old women went as young ones; and (the most difficult of all to succeed in) every plain woman went as a beauty. Forced smiles, hollow laughter, flowing words, paint, false hair, false teeth, flow-

ers, feathers, gems, and lace, were more or less successful in the ambitious attempt to baffle the iron force of sorrow, time, and nature.

With regard to those who attempted to play the part of some character in history or mythology,—the great majority of the young girls figured as Flora, a very easy and popular personage; for maidens have simply to cover their dress and their heads with flowers, and carry a basket of the same in their hand, and persuade themselves (no difficult task) that they look beautiful. There were dumpy Floras, and red-haired Floras, and smutty Floras, with black hair and cocked noses, and tall, lank, bony Floras, all supremely pleased with the interesting appearance they made. There was an Iris, holding over her head a stiff semicircular arc of pasteboard, which looked like a skipping-rope arrested in mid-air: the surface was a few inches wide, and was painted with all the colours necessary to represent the rainbow. This young lady did her best to attract the attention of Juno, whose messenger she should naturally be; but Miss Neville gave her no encouragement, for the rainbow was continually coming in contact with the lustres, and very likely to take fire, instead of borrowing its hues from the lights, as a well-ordered rainbow should; or else there was some danger that, vapoury as it was supposed to be, it would make havoc among the glass pendants.

Those who did not aspire to be goddesses, but were content to play the part of mortals, got on better. Mrs Parker was acting a gipsy, in a red silk cloak and coquettish straw bonnet; she was ensconced in a corner, with a crowd of gentlemen in front of her, telling them their fortunes. Her face had not much of the Gitana outline, but she had black, wicked, sparkling eyes, and rich black hair, and looked extremely well. In her assumed character she seemed quite a success, for the gentlemen were offering her their hands in emulation of one another, and she took them without much coyness in her own dainty little hands, and fingered them prettily. Her vaticinations appeared to afford much pleasure—to the others though—rather than to the object of them, and were received with shouts of applause. The Misses Routledge, as Swiss peasants, looked very pretty and picturesque. Maria Neville did not condescend to adopt any character, but was dressed however with studied magnificence, and amused herself by watching the triumphs or the failures of her friends.

Among the gentlemen there was an abundance of Turks, which

character seemed as popular there as Flora was with the ladies—the turban appearing to the former as becoming as the flowers to the latter, and both characters having the common advantage that they could be supported by the dress without much strain upon the intellect. Some men were stalking about as Romans, and others figuring as Greeks. It appeared also that a few were labouring to support individual characters picked from either nation, but who the chosen hero might be was not easy to discover ; and Campbell remarked to Milly that it was a great omission that they did not put labels on their foreheads announcing the name of the hero whom they took upon them to personate.

The happiest looking person in the room was a Mrs Bradford, who was in close attendance on a son and a daughter, of whom she was evidently very proud. The youth was dressed as Bacchus, and did not become the character badly. He wore a jacket and trowsers of a light colour, profusely ornamented with ivy and vine leaves ; on his head he wore a small hat garlanded with rich purple grapes and vine-leaves ; in his hand he held the thyrsus twined with ivy and vine-leaves, and a fir cone on the point ; he was about sixteen, plump, rosy, and ingenuous looking. The young lady was acting Pomona ; she was delicate and pretty ; she wore a beautiful green silk dress trimmed round the bottom, and in a double row down the front, with small waxen apples and leaves alternately ; on her head was an elegant chip hat wreathed with apples and leaves, and a basket of the same fruit in her hand. But by far the nicest figure among them all was Charles Routledge representing Mercury, according to arrangement ; he wore a flesh-coloured jacket and pantaloons fitting quite close to his person, and which exhibited his graceful, lithe, young limbs to great advantage ; he had on his head a beautiful white felt hat, with wings of grey pigeon feathers, which his sisters had made in the neatest manner ; attached to his ankles were similar wings ; a purple silk scarf flowed from his shoulder, and he held the caduceus in his hand ; the rod was of ebony, wreathed with gilt serpents having garnet eyes. He generally kept near the daïs ready to go on Miss Neville's errands, and she had occasion for his services more than once, while she was confined to the same spot receiving her guests. In vain did Iris hover near the queen in her ærial yellow gauze robe, with her fair hair curling on her shoulders, and holding her rainbow high over her head. Juno took scarcely any notice of her, but seemed determined to avail

herself of Jove's absence by employing his messenger instead of her own.

Campbell and Mrs Davenport having surveyed the figures for some time from the sofa, the latter expressed uneasiness at the non-appearance of her husband. Campbell observed that he was no doubt enjoying himself.

"I dare say he is," answered she, "but that is the very thing that prevents you from doing the same, I am such a restraint on you ; Arthur has no consideration."

"Milly, you should not speak in that manner, for you know well in what my only enjoyment consists. Shall I take you over to the fortune-teller ? Perhaps she would amuse you."

He conducted her to the merry group. Mercury, who was among them, hastened to shake hands with Campbell, bowing to Mrs Davenport, whom he knew a little. He was in the highest spirits. "Why, Campbell, I did not know you were here. How quiet you look ! I wonder you did not come as somebody besides yourself ; it is the pleasantest thing on earth to get rid of one's self for a while."

"Yes," answered Campbell, "*if you can* get rid of yourself. If I could do so, I assure you the divorce should be for life, and not for a few hours." Then assuming a more playful tone, "You don't seem to regret your old self much ; you are enjoying your god-head. Is the divine nature pleasant ? Have you pilfered much since your apotheosis ?"

"Nothing but hearts, I hope. My function of messenger is what I have been principally exercising, for Juno has been pleased to send me on different missions, but I have a little time left for you, doctor. Since you have come here in your own character, you may have to kill a few people, and I am ready to escort the 'pious souls' to their 'merry abodes,' as that humorous little Horace calls the place below. I wish to be on the wing the whole night. Mrs Davenport, can I do anything for you ?"

He glanced at her from under the broad brim of his white hat, with his sweet, playful, black eyes ; and what with them, and his beautiful aquiline nose and delicate, sculptured mouth, and manners, truly Mercurial, it seemed to her that it was worth coming to the ball only to meet him.

"Can you tell me where my husband is ?" asked she.

"He is gone down to look at the eastern saloon. Parker is taking half the people to see it, though we did not intend to show

it until they were all assembled in the dancing-room, which opens into it. The curtain is drawn across the archway, and it is to shoot back all in good time ; but meantime he is stealing under it with party after party. He is such a troublesome, busy little fellow. Miss Neville sent me just now to forbid his taking any more persons in ; but, however, ma'am, your lord has had the private *entrée*, and I left him admiring everything. Come, Campbell, don't you want to have your fortune told ? The gipsy has just told me mine ; I'm to kill three wives, so since they are doomed to be polished off by being united to me, I'll marry three of the strongest, healthiest viragos in the kingdom, and save three other poor fellows fifty years a-piece of it. Do you see how I victimize myself for others, Mrs Davenport ? Come, Campbell ! ”

Mrs Parker, who had just dismissed a meek, insipid-looking gentleman with a promise of being henpecked, started on hearing Campbell's name, and looked round. “ Oh, I was expecting you ! You wish surely to have your fortune told ? ” As she said this, she fixed on him a steady, searching gaze.

“ I have no objection,” answered he, “ if it pleases you ; but I think I know my destiny already.”

“ Come, then, let us see whether our foreknowledges coincide,” said she, laughing.

Mrs Davenport withdrew her arm from Campbell, and fell back a little. Charles immediately gave her his. Mrs Parker took the hand of the new aspirant, which he held out to her in rather a cold and listless manner ; and while she was examining its lines, the gentlemen whose fortunes had been already told began to scrutinize the face of the last comer.

“ A lack-a-daisical looking swain,” said one in a whisper to another ; “ there is no good luck in store for him. I should say he was doomed to hang himself on a willow-tree after having found his lady-love drowned in the stream beneath it.”

“ Unless some one else does the good office for him,” answered the other ; “ for on a second look I find something very dark in the expression of his face.”

“ Silence ! ” cried the gipsy ; “ not a murmur ! I see the whole clear before me.” And she looked straight at the wall opposite to her, as collecting her thoughts. There was a dead silence, and she chanted out the following words in a rich, melodious voice :—

"Your home was a lone humble cottage last night,
 And now 'tis a palace all gorgeous and bright;
 Men call you a stranger, you think you're a guest,
 But the gipsy says 'Master,'—and gipsies know best.
 The halls and the incense, the banquet and wine,
 The canopied throne and the footstool are thine;
 Of the viol and tabret and harp thou art lord;
 They will pause at thy bidding, or swell at thy word;
 The flowers are heaped round thee—why leave them to rot?
 Earth's honours have found thee—why value them not?
 Oh, deem not thy merits are less than thy lot!
 Can that face and that voice be by woman forgot?
 Sail to port then in triumph, all nature's serene,
 And a white-armed goddess smiles softs on the scene."

She ceased, and looked him full in the face, but could collect nothing from its impassable expression. He bowed, and withdrew his hand.

"Bravo, gipsy!" cried Charles; "there is nothing like doing the thing handsomely. Dr Campbell, what will you do for me when you are king consort? Make me usher of the black rod? My present character gives me a taste for that office," he said, tapping his knee with his caduceus.

Mrs Davenport wondered that Campbell did not laugh, nor make any response to Mrs Parker's verses. He would have done so certainly, however he might have felt, had he been a man of the world, but he was a bad dissembler, and too sensitive to act a part. But the little prophetess was not easily discouraged: as he was turning away from her she caught his arm, and said to him in a whisper, "Do our foreknowledges tally?"

"Not in the least," he answered.

"The verses are no exaggeration; your fortune is in your own hands," she replied.

"I wish I could say so myself," and he turned away from her abruptly.

While she was looking after him puzzled and amazed, her husband came up leading a young man, very nice-looking, though not exactly handsome: "My dear, Lord Olford threatens to shoot himself if he misses your hand for the first dance." His Lordship smiled at the threat which had been put into his mouth.

"Anything to prevent suicide!" she cried; and tossing her hat and cloak to her husband, tripped off with the peer.

Campbell gave his arm again to Mrs Davenport, saying to Charles, "I see you took good care of her while this farce was going on."

Charles, who never pressed a lead when he found his seniors were not inclined to follow, gave up his bantering manner, and said seriously, "Mrs Parker is clever, but has no judgment; and those kind of persons are always getting themselves into scrapes, or annoying others. I dare say Miss Neville would be very angry if she knew she was acting so giddily."

Campbell, very unjustly, suspected that Miss Neville had instigated her to deliver the prophecy; to Charles he said evasively: "She is very proud of her poetry, I fancy, and will probably serve up these lines to several gentlemen before the night is over." He added no more: Charles and Mrs Davenport were both wishing he would tell them what the gipsy had whispered to him; but as he did not volunteer, they could not attempt to ask him, and Mercury shot off to the dais to attend upon Juno.

The ceremony of receiving her guests was now over, and Miss Neville was resting herself for a few minutes on the sofa near her mother. A crowd of gentlemen stood before her, all anxious to render her some service. She accepted of a glass of iced lemonade from the hand of one of them, and looked tired and anxious. Dr Campbell had disappeared, and she could not get a glimpse of him anywhere. Her plans were failing at the very beginning of the night. She had settled that when the work of reception was over, she would make something like a royal progress through all her brilliant apartments; first she would go round the drawing-room, look at the characters, and say something complimentary to those who struck her most; she was then to go down to the dancing-room, walk round it, and see that everything was in full readiness for the commencement of this amusement. She would take a look into the grand hall beyond, and then return to the drawing-room and give the signal for the gentlemen to conduct their partners down-stairs. She was to open the ball with Sir Henry Broughton, a baronet, and the largest landed proprietor in the neighbourhood after herself. It was he, with his wife and sister-in-law, who had called off her attention just as she was going to beckon Campbell to her side. Now, though she was to dance with Sir Henry, Campbell was the

man on whose arm she intended to lean when she was making her "royal progress." She longed to show him her "Palace of Art," and find out what he thought of it; she had her heart set on so doing, and surely it did not seem a difficult matter, as she had expected he would be standing near her,—but he had been jostled away, and where was he now? While she was answering the polite speeches of the gentlemen in an absent manner, Charles came up to her.

"Ho! Mercury! where have you been?" she asked.

"I have been speaking a few words to my friend Dr Campbell at the other end of the room."

"Ha! have you?" she said, with an entire change of voice and manner. "And what is he about?"

"He is not doing much," answered Mercury.

"Go, then, my good Hermes, and ask him to join our party here."

The delighted Hermes flew off, and found Campbell again seated on the sofa with Mrs Davenport. He tapped him on the shoulder with his rod. "Happy soul! I am come to summon you to Elysium. The queen demands your presence; she is seated on a couch near the dais."

He was running away again, but Campbell called him back rather peevishly: "Charles, tell me simply whether Miss Neville wants me."

"Ay, does she; make do delay!" and he raced off.

"What in the world does she want?" said Campbell rising. "Come, Milly."

But she did not send for me; I will wait here until you come back," said Mrs Davenport.

"Wait there, indeed! and how can we say how long she will keep me if she finds me disengaged and at her service? Leave you there, with every one staring at you, and no one speaking to you! That is not what I promised Davenport that I would do. I presume Miss Neville has not made a law against our walking about the room together, so we will go in the direction Charles mentions, and when we come to her sofa I will ask her whether I can do anything for her. Come!"

Mrs Davenport obeyed, and they made their way with difficulty through the crowd, though the gentlemen endeavoured to clear a passage for the most beautiful woman in the room. When they drew near Miss Neville, Mrs Davenport, who perceived that

Campbell was out of temper, whispered to him : " Dear Robert, be polite to her ; consider her position—so much above us."

He smiled rather a scornful smile, and, adjusting his face, approached Miss Neville. The gentlemen immediately fell back, eyeing Mrs Davenport in silence.

" Have you any commands to honour me with, Miss Neville ? " said Campbell ; " your Mercury intimated something of the kind to me."

She was much vexed, both at the stiffness of his manner, and at the ceremonious forms into which her desire to have him join her party had been thrown. She was moreover dismayed at seeing that Mrs Davenport had his arm engaged. She answered, rather confused : " Oh ! it is not of much consequence ; "—then turning quickly to Mrs Davenport,— " I beg to apologize to you, Mrs Davenport, for being the cause of your coming down the room through the crowd ; I hope Mr Routledge did not say I sent for you ; I did no such thing."

Campbell, as usual, answered for her before she had time. " Mr Routledge never mentioned her, but she is under my care at present ; Mr Davenport left her with me while he went to speak to some friends with whom she is not acquainted."

" Miss Neville," said Mrs Davenport, " if you have any commands for Dr Campbell, I will sit down here until he comes back."

Campbell cast a displeased look at her, which Miss Neville did not fail to notice. The sofa was full, and five gentlemen, hearing her express an intention of sitting down, flew to get her a seat, and in a moment five chairs were at her service. Campbell, however, would not permit her to sit down, but kept close possession of her arm, and continued standing before Miss Neville, awaiting her commands. She saw that he was resolved not to leave Mrs Davenport for an instant ; it was impossible for her to execute her plan, and she felt awkward and mortified. She knew he never danced, but she was obliged to find some excuse for summoning him, and said.

" If you will dance, I wish to introduce you to a very nice young lady, quite to your taste, I should say."

He shook his head : " I never, never dance." Not wishing to go away too abruptly, he sat down on one of the five chairs, and placed Milly beside him on another ; he said a few commonplace things to Miss Neville, and she answered him in a troubled

manner ; she had a presentiment of misery ; he seemed very little intoxicated, indeed, either with herself or her magnificent environments ; he was absorbed apparently in the clergyman's wife, even while he was striving to be polite to her. Her sister now came up to her.

"Alicia, do tell us when the dancing is to commence ; Mr Parker says the musicians are ready this hour, and Sir Henry Broughton is expecting his summons every moment."

"Well, we will begin now," she answered, languidly ; then rallying, she turned in a lively manner to Charles, who had just taken his station at her side :—"Run, Mercury, and tell Sir Henry I am ready, and desire the other gentlemen to follow us with their partners."

Sir Henry came and led her off, and Charles with his rod directed and regulated the throng of gentlemen, each leading his partner ; and, in truth, they did not look unlike a multitude of ghosts rushing before Mercury to Tartarus, each with one of his instruments of punishment linked to his arm.

The musicians were heard from below flourishing their prelude, the odour of the incense entered through the open door with the tones of the band, and the reception-room began rapidly to thin. The dancers all ranged themselves in their respective places, headed by the superb Juno, the admired of all admirers, the dispenser of all this magical delight, and the queen of a fortune apparently so princely that these far-fetched and accumulated luxuries seemed to her as empty as chaff before the wind. Then arose the full chorus of "the cornet, lute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all manner of music ;" and simultaneously the queen, followed by a hundred couples, bounded into that absorbing and bewitching exercise, cultivated equally by the most civilized and the most savage nations,—the poetry of motion,—the mystical representation of the passion of love, kindled and at the same time refined by music ;—the model picture of order first creating, and then permeating, disciplining, and chastising disorder, until all closes with the perfect harmony that marked the beginning ;—finally,—the outlet for exuberant feelings and emotions, kept within bounds however, and modulated in strict obedience to the laws of art. But though the heiress's step was light her heart was heavy ; she had left the only one she cared for, and the only one for whom she had been toiling through this pleasure, above-stairs with the vicar's wife, and she did not know

when, amidst her manifold engagements, she should meet him again ; to her the sound of " the cornet, lute, harp, sackbut, psalter, dulcimer, and all manner of music," could bring no gladness, saving so far as they could be (which, alas ! they were not) the signal to fall down and worship the golden image which her impassioned soul had set up.

A few quiet people still lingered in the reception-room, enjoying the coolness and calm which are felt in a degree almost approaching to voluptuousness in a spacious and lofty apartment whence an immense crowd had just disembogued itself. Several very well-executed statues, chiefly from Grecian models, which had been hitherto totally concealed by the surging mass of animated life, seemed suddenly to step into prominency, and to claim admiration from the remaining stragglers for their serene and classic beauty. Campbell and Mrs Davenport walked about contemplating them.

" It is a relief, Milly, to the ruffled mind to rest upon these lovely, still, passionless-looking figures, smiling on our empty noise and senseless mirth, our petty troubles, and contemptible vanities. There they stand, never changing, looking down on the current of time which concerns them no more, but is whirling us along on its surface, poor convulsed creatures !—to be as quiet as themselves, however, by and by. Pity we cannot resemble them a little in their passiveness ! But nearly every one has left the room,—we cannot stay here, much as we might like it ; I believe there are very fine things below on which we shall be expected to bestow a round sum of applause."

As they were going to the door Davenport rattled in.

" What on earth are you about ? why don't you both come down ? every one is below, and the scene is magnificent : why, my darling, you might as well be at home as moping here ! "

" This is the very spot where you gave her in charge to me," said Campbell, " and here I give her back to you in high preservation ; have I not performed my duty well ? "

" Yes, but you might have come down before ; there are crowds of people asking me whether she will dance ; they thought she was engaged to you as they saw her on your arm, but now they cannot make you out in the sets, and they do not know what has become of her."

" It is too late to dance this set, I will dance the next," said Mrs Davenport.

Here a gentleman ran in and tapped Mr Davenport on the back.

"Come down, come down! Miss Maria Neville is inquiring for you everywhere, and is most anxious to know whether you will dance."

"Dance!" cried Davenport; "La, no! of course I never dance;—a clergyman! What puts such a thing into her head? Are there any other clergymen dancing?"

"You are the only clergyman here," said Campbell wickedly.

"That is a thing beyond your power to establish," answered Davenport tartly, "even if you had taken a note of every one who entered this room; for several single men arrived while Mr Parker and I were walking about the hall, and he told them they need not bother Miss Neville going up to her, and they joined our party below, and you cannot tell what they are." Then turning to the gentleman, "Is Miss Maria Neville going to dance herself?"

"Probably; and who knows but she wishes to dance with you?" he added, with a half smile.

Davenport looked foolish. "That would be a ridiculous thing, I am sure, when she has all the fashionables and nobles at her feet; there is a good sprinkling of peers and honourables here to-night; why should she think of such a poor fellow as I am?"

The gentleman rejoined: "Why, the fact is, you're deuced good-looking, and by far the tallest man in the room,—Sir Henry Broughton is barely six feet; women delight in tall men."

"But," said Davenport laughing, "they don't like such outlandish fellows as I am, six feet one and a half; still if she took it into her head to want to dance with me, it would be confoundedly awkward; could I refuse her? eh, Amelia, my love?"

"Certainly, if you think dancing wrong for *you*."

"Pooh! 'wrong' is too decided a word, I never thought it 'wrong,' only not expedient."

"Come, come," cried the other, "will you stand here all night? You must have the manners to go down and beg to know what she wants you for."

He lugged him off, Davenport muttering "I'm sure I forget every step I ever learned;" the other comforting him with "Fashionable people merely walk through the figures, they need no steps."

"He will dance," said Mrs Davenport, looking mournfully after her husband.

"Let him then, and welcome," cried Campbell; "in the name of heaven what harm will it do him? Is a man of his temperament to have no amusement? How better can he vent his buoyant spirits? Believe me, people who decline those innocent recreations which they can enjoy only before the eyes of a world in whose sight they wish to pass for saints, will (if, like him, they require pleasure) lapse into some secret indulgence apart and hidden from that world, and, being free from the check of its observation, it is very likely they will choose some much more questionable pleasure than dancing."

"With regard to his dancing, I have no objection to it, if he himself did not feel any compunction. But I do not like to see him led away by excitement and persuasion to act against his conscience in a manner which he thinks imprudent and unbecoming."

"Well, there is some sense in that, Milly; you are always right, and I am always wrong, in the long run; is it not so?" he said, smiling on her from the deep gulfs of his dark eyes.

"I don't know; I speak generally from impulse, and you from reasoning; you ought surely to be right sometimes."

"Ah! women speak from their intuitions, and intuitions are something like inspiration; when they trust to them they never err, but if they attempt to argue—Come, come, let us go down."

They descended to the animated scene below. Numbers were walking about the hall; the front door was open and the coolness refreshing. They proceeded to the ball-room (the dining-parlour in days of prose and quietness). Waltzing had now commenced, and countless pairs were spinning and whirling round one another, under a blaze of light and a torrent of music. The airy brilliant drapery of the ladies was swinging, tossing, and waving, in exact keeping with their rapid and almost magical motions. At the end of the room, opposite to the door by which Campbell and Milly entered, the great breach which had so shocked Maria Neville, was now a bold, lofty archway, dazzlingly illuminated. The curtain of course was drawn back, and a vista of enchantment stretched far beyond, until the vision was lost in coloured lamps reflected in glassy waters, and in avenues shaded with eastern plants of massy foliage and gorgeous, exuberant bloom. Poor Milly, who had led a most retired life since her marriage, and who had hated gaiety before it, was quite electrified.

"Oh, Robert, how glorious! Is it not like the wildest dream?"

What princely ideas Miss Neville has, and how grandly she executes them !”

“ Well, Milly, if all this pleases you so much, I will not call it entirely idle nonsense.”

Thus was he “dazzled and blinded ;” his being “led captive” did not seem likely to be the result of his present emotions,—whatever he felt, too, being measured simply by the amount of gratification the grand panorama afforded to another woman. Mrs Davenport next cast an anxious look among the dancers, dreading lest she should espy her husband amidst the bounding throng. She knew he was as supple as an eel, and that he was constantly leaping, and riding, and exercising his muscles, and that he could waltz as well as any man there if he chose. But as far as her hasty glance informed her, he was not of the number.

They walked slowly along the avenue which led from the ball-room door to the archway ; it was roped in with scarlet cording, lest the dancers on either side should intrude on the passage to the grand eastern saloon. They were amused at the dizzying effect of the waltzers on their right and left, spinning in inextricable mazes like teetotums. Miss Neville was very conspicuous in her diamond tiara, dancing with Lord Olford, dragging on through the hated apprenticeship which was to be the means, as she had fancied, of bringing her to a real sphere of action and a joyous existence, when she would dash to the winds all these sickening inanities and fictitious glories, and sit down with the chosen of her heart to a simple and useful course of life. Such had been her feelings in the morning, but now they were chilled—nearly annihilated. She had seen by Campbell's face when he was seated near her for those few minutes that he was as cold as marble, or, if occupied by anything, it was with the married woman in whose party he appeared to have come. Now it seemed to her that she could have exercised more power over him in her quiet drawing-room with her disabled foot on a hassock, than in the midst of this display, which he might perhaps think suited to her position, but could not himself enjoy, nor accept with congenial feelings. She began to think she would say nothing to him to-night, her latest conclusion being that it might disgust him. She came to the conclusion that, as far as he was concerned, she had gone through all this toil and excitement for nothing. She had been preparing for him perfumed love, spangled and plated

affections, and soft vows made softer by wrappings of velvet. These thoughts were rushing through her mind as she danced with apparent animation, and Lord Olford's arm clasping her round. He would willingly have clasped her for ever, but she gave him no encouragement, for whatever she was, she was no coquette. She raised her eyes by chance, and beheld Campbell and Mrs Davenport walking towards the archway, and apparently contemplating the long vista before them with great admiration. The former caught her eye, smiled, and gave a slight bow of recognition. Then came a new revolution within her breast. That smile and bow—reader!—I cannot wear out your patience by telling you all it seemed to convey to her. “How glad I am to see you dancing with such strength and spirit after your accident!” “How enchanted I am with everything here!” “How I wish to speak with you, and tell you how I admire your exquisite taste and love for the fine arts!” In pity we will give no more of her wild fancies. She saw him pass under the arch and survey the eastern saloon in evident astonishment. Oh! if she were only by his side now to hear what he had to say! It was insufferable in that woman to engross him the whole night! What a pretty husband she had, who would let her make herself so remarkable! But it should not be; very likely, indeed, that the stupid, waxy-looking mistress of a poor vicarage should domineer over her, in the heart of her palace and on the pinnacle of her power and glory! Her husband had said she had no objection to dance, and, please goodness, she should dance the next quadrille, and give that poor man his liberty for a short time.

Meantime poor Milly was examining everything in the eastern saloon with much interest. The hideous pit that had disgusted Maria so much was now a long beautiful sheet of pellucid water; a border of fresh green turf ran along its banks on either side; from this turf rose, at about three yards' distance from each other, light pillars of unbarked timber, round which green garlands twined spirally, and to which coloured lamps were attached, which were beautifully imaged in the water below. Festoons of leaves and flowers hung between each pillar, and under each festoon was a white basket, with gilt rim and handle, supplied with various fruits which lay at the disposal of the company. The walls of the building were, as the workman had promised, hung with moreen and lined with vases, crocks, and pans of every de-

scription, containing rare exotics, supplied not only by the Sunville conservatories, which would have gone but a short way in furnishing the number required, but also by the contributions of the Routledges and other neighbours, who lent their best treasures for the great occasion. The avenue between the grass border and the plants was covered with fine matting. There were numbers of people walking up and down, eating fruit, conversing, and enjoying the cool air at the water's edge. When Campbell and Milly arrived at the further end of the saloon, they found a door which opened into a gravel walk, and on the other side of the walk was a little grapery, lighted up also. They went into it,—for Milly should see everything,—and there found Bacchus and Pomona, and a young gentleman who had been dancing with the latter. Bacchus had his hat in his hand, and was settling it very studiously; Pomona's lay on the ground by her, and she seemed much relieved at being disencumbered of its weight; her basket was also flung aside and she looked hot and weary. "*Evoe Liber!*" cried Campbell, slapping the youth on the back, for he knew him very well, having lately attended him in the measles; "what art thou doing here?"

Bacchus looked up in his face with a delighted smile:

"Well, sir, you are the only person who has addressed me in those words since I came here, and my father, when he was putting us into the carriage, said that every one I met in the ball-room would cry out '*Evoe!*' to me, and not a soul has done so—people are so disagreeable and stupid; I verily believe the gentlemen don't know what I am, or if they do they have no taste, for instead of endeavouring to support me, as people ought at a fancy ball, they have been tormenting me all the evening, and plucking the grapes off my head and eating them, just to worry me; they could get plenty in those baskets in the saloon if they liked. I ought to have had wax grapes, only mamma said they'd come too expensive; just look at my hat, doctor."

Campbell surveyed it, bristling all round with little short stumpy stalks, and a half-torn leaf here and there.

Bacchus continued: "But it was so kind of Miss Maria Neville; she directed me here and gave me leave to pull as many bunches as I chose for refitting it, and it will soon be nicer than ever, if they will just let me alone."

"Drive them to frenzy with your thyrsus," said Campbell, "if they continue to molest you any longer."

"Oh, that's true! my thyrsus is lost, I am afraid; my mother promised to take charge of it while I was dancing, and just at that moment I could not see her, so I laid it on a bench and it was gone when I went back to look for it."

"There is a serious responsibility in undertaking a character," observed Campbell, smiling at his innocent troubles.

"Tis harder work than I thought, sir, and the weather is so hot, and my mother is hunting after us everywhere, watching what we are saying and scolding us for not doing our parts better, until at last I was obliged to tell her that if I, at any rate, did my part perfectly, I should get drunk, and that she would not relish that much; so she has not worried me so much since." He then took out his handkerchief, wiped his face, and began to twist the new bunches of grapes round his hat.

Mrs Davenport addressed Pomona: "You are not sorry to be free from that hat awhile, it is so heavy with apples."

"Oh, ma'am, it is the greatest comfort to have got rid of it; I have such a headache; and having to dance with it on! if I could stay in my bare head for the rest of the evening I should be so delighted! but mamma never would allow me. I don't think these fancy balls are such pleasant things at all, though we were awake the half of every night all last week thinking of this one, and now I am quite disappointed."

"Well then to me it appears quite *chaarming*," drawled out her cavalier, "and if you knew how that hat becomes you, you would not fall out with it."

Here their mother, Mrs Bradford, bustled in, looking hot and blazing enough for any Semele.

"What is all this about? Johnny, why are you hiding yourself here? where's Emmy? Goodness! Emmy, what possessed you to take off your hat? I'm sure 'tis lucky I came in to put it on you again, for you never could have done it right yourself. Johnny, you stupid creature, here is your thyrsus—you left it lying about, and only Mr Parker found it and brought it to me, I don't know what we should ever have done. Oh! doctor, how do you do? Is it not a most fidgety, nervous piece of work undertaking these serious affairs? You know a failure is so disgraceful. I hope you think Johnny and Emmy are going on pretty well;—not animated enough;—I insist, children, that you both exert yourselves more;—you Johnny, have a song to sing;—don't forget."

"Indeed now, mother, I cannot do such a thing except Miss Neville asks me, and she is thinking very little about me. Do you want me to begin shouting out as I am walking up and down among all the people? A pretty butt I should be made!"

"You have no tact, you stupid boy; Mrs Parker has just sung a sweet little song in her gipsy character, and every one is so delighted! Come, on with your hat, Emmy."

"Now, mamma, I cannot put it on again to-night; the weight of it is half killing me."

"Not put it on indeed! a capital joke! I wonder you are not ashamed to speak of its weight. Look at that poor Sophy Ridley, how she is carrying that great heavy rainbow over her head all the evening, without ever flinching; a brave creature! She has not danced yet; won't part with her bow; and you can dance so comfortably with your hat on."

"Comfortably indeed!" repeated Emma, "I'll dance no more; I never went through such hard work in my life."

The mother, however, persisted in tying on the hat again, and Campbell, with a double portion of the consideration that is generally found in physicians, was going to interfere in behalf of the delicate young girl, when Davenport sprang into the grapery, nearly dashing his head through the low glass roof. *

"So I have found you at last!" he cried to his wife and Campbell; "why in the world are you burying yourselves in this way? Amelia, I told you before there are crowds of gentlemen wishing to dance with you, and you are hiding as if you were Cinderella after twelve o'clock;—and—Campbell,—Mrs Routledge and twenty others are asking whether the earth has swallowed you; and there are a great many persuaded I have come figuring off here by myself, which I by no means wish to have thought;—will you both come to the dancing-room!"

He then spied Bacchus, and forthwith cried out: "*Io triumphe!* what news from India?"

"*Omnia devicta sunt in illâ regione, domine,*" answered Bacchus, making a desperate effort to come out strong, and astonish Mr Davenport, and delight his mother; at the same time colouring scarlet at his own boldness in venturing on such a step as to answer in Latin.

"Capital! *Macte virtute, puer ingenue!*" cried Davenport; then, addressing the mother,—"Madam, he is a most promising lad."

"Well, now, indeed since you say it, he certainly is," answered the delighted Mrs Bradford; then pressing a little closer to Mr Davenport,—“and since you have mentioned India, I may as well tell you that our great desire is to get him out there in the civil service, but poor Mr Bradford has no interest and is rather an invalid and inactive; so perhaps you could kindly do some little thing to forward our plans—every one says you are so obliging, and I am sure you have good interest——.”

Davenport could no longer keep in: “My dear madam,—India! Why, I was only alluding to his character as Bacchus. Interest! I assure you I have not the slightest: besides they are going to make the appointments depend on competitive examinations and not on either money or interest, and in this case your son will have an excellent chance, for he seems to be a very good scholar.”

“That he is; but he is so backward he never does himself justice;—now an introduction from you to one of the heads of parties——”

“Heads of parties! I declare, ma'am, I' am not acquainted with the humblest joint in their tail. I have not the smallest hope of getting any promotion for myself, but must plod on unassisted, and provide as well as I can for my seventeen children——”

“Seventeen children!” echoed Mrs Bradford, looking in astonishment at Mrs Davenport, who appeared to her to be about three-and-twenty.

“Why, ma'am, I do not say that they are all put clean out of hands, or are presentable yet, but that the future will be swarming with them is undoubted, if life be spared; and it behoves a prudent man to anticipate the worst—if indeed worst I ought to call it.”

Mrs Davenport turned her head towards Campbell's breast until her forehead nearly touched his shoulder, while her thick curls, falling over her cheek, concealed its vermilion hue.

Campbell cast a look of indignation at Davenport. “Come away,” he whispered to Milly, and led her to the door.

“Wait, I am going with you,” cried Davenport.

“Bacchus, my boy,” he continued, turning to young Bradford, “if you want to be examined in Latin, or French, or mathematics, come to me, and I'll do it with pleasure, and no doubt you will deserve a very good testimonial.”

He was going to clap him on the head, but poor Bacchus started aside.

"Oh ! sir, take care and don't break off my grapes ; I've just put in fresh ones ; the grapes I had on when I came were all plucked off and eaten by those rude gentlemen."

"They ate the grapes off your head ! why, my dear boy, you'll be hanged !"

"Oh, sir !"

"Certainly," continued Davenport, laughing. "You'll allow I ought to be versed in Scripture ; well, did not the birds eat the bake-meat out of the basket that was on the head of Pharaoh's chief baker, and did not Joseph tell the man he would be hanged ; and was not he hanged ? Ha, ha, ha !"

"True enough, sir," said Johnny disconsolately.

"Poor fellow !" said the mother. "Such a worshipper of truth that he cannot even understand a joke. I'll tell his father of your kind offer to examine him. Come, come, children ! Here, Emmy, take your basket. Stuff ! don't hold it pasted to your side as if you were Red Riding-Hood with her little offering of eggs and butter. Can't you hold it with the grace and swing of a goddess ?"

"Really, mamma, I never saw a goddess carry a basket, and I do not know how she does it."

"Pray, allow me," said her beau, offering to relieve her from it.

"Not at all, my dear sir," cried the mother. "I know you mean to be polite, and it would do very well in everyday life to carry her umbrella or her cloak for her, but in performing this important part she must herself be invested with all the badges of her character. There, Emmy, that's better. Bless my heart, Johnny ! you look as if you were a milkmaid striving to balance herself under a heavy pail. Cannot you carry your head with ease and carelessness ? The fact is, you've double too much grapes on your hat."

"Now, mother, let me alone, and I'll get on very well directly," cried Johnny, giving his head a preliminary toss to show what he was still capable of.

At last they all left the grapery.

"Dear, dear !" said Davenport, looking after Mrs Bradford, "people may say it is entertaining to watch clever persons keeping up an assumed character well at these kind of places, but

give me those who keep up their own so admirably. Just think of that woman seizing on me about India, and I scarcely know her at all!"

"You are keeping up your own character very well," said Campbell sulkily. "I mean your real, natural character; when will you give us a specimen of the assumed one in which you threatened to come here—a censor of levity, and a promoter of order and decorum?"

"You are deuced saucy," answered the other. "I am sure you don't know what I have been saying or doing, for you have been keeping away from me all the night."

"Indeed now, Arthur," said his wife, "*you* have been keeping away from *us*; you first ran off to speak to Mr Thornhill, and then you went down to dance."

"Now, my love, you have no business to say I went to dance. I only went to know what that young lady wanted me for."

"And you did not dance?"

"Not a step."

Mrs Davenport seemed relieved. They went back to the eastern saloon, and while they were walking up and down by the water's side she asked him what Miss Maria Neville wanted him for.

"My dear, I suppose it was to try and make me ridiculous, but she did not find it so easy. She introduced me to a monster of a girl, almost as tall as myself—a great horse-godmother of a creature—done up as Bellona, with a huge pasteboard helmet on her head, with straight white feathers standing up, and a long tail of black horsehair dangling down, and a great ægis in her hand, as if the sight of herself was not enough to turn any poor man to stone. And with this savage Miss Maria actually tormented me to dance, just to make us the laughing-stock of the room, because we were the two tallest persons here. A pretty figure I'd have cut. And I am sure that fellow Jackson knew the joke very well when he took me down, for he was bursting into a horse-laugh every minute while that impudent girl was badgering me."

"It seems to have been a very equine business altogether," said Campbell, "a horse-godmother, and horse-laughter, and a colt very unwilling it appears to be put into harness. You found your religion come in handily, I dare say, to assist you in a graceful refusal."

"But, Arthur, tell us how you escaped from the Bellona," said his wife.

"At last, my love, I said quietly to Miss Maria Neville, 'I apprehend, ma'am, you forget what my profession is.' And I turned on my heel."

"A grand passage in history," said Campbell; "so simple and yet so sweepingly decisive!"

"I hope," cried Davenport, "you will both have handsomer children than Vulcan was; and, indeed, it seems likely."

Amelia interrupted him. "Arthur, dear, you are not attending to me; how did Bellona look when you refused to dance?"

"She got a partner without much delay, for that ill-natured Maria Neville took the unfortunate little Parker and made him dance a quadrille with her."

"But why would either of them submit to be so befooled?" asked his wife.

"As to her, I suspect she is some second-rate person, who is so proud of being asked here that she would do anything the heiresses commanded her. And as to him—ah, my dear, you do not know what it is to have a bottle or so of champagne in one's head."

"I thought he seemed half tipsy," observed Campbell, "when he brought Lord Olford up to his wife as a partner."

"He is not far from it; you see there was a select dinner-party here to-day, and he acted master, I am told."

(Campbell took care not to tell that he had received a private note from Miss Neville, entreating him to make one of the party, and how he had refused, preferring to go in the evening with the Davenports.)

Davenport continued: "The Routledges were of the number, and Major and Mrs Smyth, and Lord Olford their cousin, who came to them on purpose for the ball; and Mr James, and some other quiet elderly people whom they did not like to ask to leave their houses at nine or ten at night, and who will probably go home early like us poor devils, who were not at the dinner."

"And are of too angelic a nature to stay to supper," interrupted Campbell.

"Just simple human creatures while we are in this world," replied Davenport; "and I who dined at home to-day at one o'clock on veal cutlets and custard pudding—heaven help me!

—am as hungry as I can be. I wish to my soul I had something to eat!”

“Not a wish can be framed to-night in this bower of enchantment that is not doomed to be gratified,” said a voice behind him.

He turned round quickly and saw Mr Parker. “Ho, ha! Mr Parker!” he stammered, rather confused. “Really the Miss Nevilles have scattered the treasures of the garden in such queen-like profusion here that I have been eating fruit until I feel a little hollowish, you know; and I was just wishing for a crust of bread or any trifle.”

“Fruit for school-boys, and crusts for the hermit’s cell,” said Mr Parker mincingly. “A man like you should positively have something more solid; and I take shame to myself for not having before introduced you to the refreshment-room; such a sweet little place, with narrow tables all round, and nice young girls behind them (one of them, a Swiss—so piquante!—the men are all flirting with her), and they are serving out anything you wish to call for—patties, ham, sandwiches, pastry, ices, jellies, cakes, lemonade, coffee, &c.”

Mr Parker took breath, having anchored at this last most convenient and all-comprehending word, which supplies the failure of eloquence, the lack of invention, and the shortcomings of memory.

“Well, I don’t care if I do take a bit of something,” said Davenport. “Amelia, will you come?”

“Oh, no! I had rather do anything than eat; I am very thirsty.”

“Then can’t you take some fruit?” said her husband.

“But my gloves and my dress might be stained.”

“I forgot; you poor women are the slaves of something or another from morning till night.”

“You can have plenty of lemonade and negus here,” said the little genie of the night; “look along that crystal lake!”

They did so, and saw a beautiful little boat which they had not noticed before; it was occupied by two pretty boys gaily dressed, who had some vases and glasses on board, and were rowing up and down apparently very happy, stopping at different places and inviting the various loungers on the banks to taste of their nectar, as they had been tutored to call the beverages.

“That will just do!” cried Davenport. “Now, Campbell,

take her to the boat and get her some negus. Come, Mr Parker, I'm your man."

They disappeared in the crowd, while Campbell took Milly's arm once more under his, and after he had procured some "nectar" for her and himself, they walked about enjoying the scene.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DOCTOR IN THE GRAPERY.

"Going? and we shall never see you more.

And I must die for want of one bold word!

I have gone mad. I love you: let me die!" —TENNYSON.

ALTHOUGH Mr Davenport had said that there was a very good sprinkling of lords and honourables at the ball, there were really very few; there were but two peers,—Lord Olford and another who rejoiced in the title of Lord Lillywhyte: he was a pretty, delicate, conceited young man; he had lately very unexpectedly succeeded to the title by the sudden death of his uncle, and could scarcely yet believe in his good luck. As to his accomplishments: he professed to be skilled in all the mysteries of the *beau monde*, and to be an excellent judge of women and horses. He had taken a shooting-box in the neighbourhood, and having on his arrival called to see the Nevilles, whom he had known in town, was of course invited to the ball. He went, *pour passer le temps*, though he had a great contempt for country gatherings and country gentlemen. Being too fine to dance, he was loitering along the canal, eating plums and annoying the little boys in the boat by flinging the stones at them. He was closely attended by an umbra in the person of a Mr Marshall, a young man of respectable family but small fortune, the passion of whose life it was to attach himself to titled persons, and to this laudable ambition he sacrificed his time, of which he had an abundance; his pride, of which he had but little; and his independence, which he did not value very highly. Lord Lillywhyte brought him down to his shooting-box as a companion in his sports; he amused him extremely by his earnest desire to become a perfect man of ton,

and by what his lordship considered his great stupidity in learning his lesson. As his master would not dance, Mr Marshall of course would not do so either ; so they employed themselves, Lord Lillywhyte by making scornful remarks on the company, and the umbra by carefully endorsing the same. At length the latter exclaimed very audaciously :

"What a piece of infatuation it was of Miss Neville to go to all this work and bore for the sake of a few country clodhoppers ! For my part I see no use in this sheet of water except to drown one-half of them in it."

He hoped to show his master by the coarseness of his language what an apt pupil he was in the art of depreciating his fellow-creatures. But Lord Lillywhyte neither liked the epithets nor approved of his echo suddenly taking the initiative in so decisive a manner. He answered sharply :—

"Miss Neville does these things to amuse herself ; what does she care about the trouble ? it keeps her labourers employed. And as to these civilized, respectable, well-dressed persons,—I am quite disgusted with you for speaking of them in such terms. After all, they are not Yorkshire yeomen ; but many of them enjoying large fortunes, and no doubt passing a good deal of time in London. Just before you spoke I was going to make you notice a lady who is walking with a gentleman on the other side of the water, close to the edge. I have not seen a prettier creature in town during the last season. And she looks so pure and fresh ; whatever colour she has is all her own. Observe her feminine ease and dignity, the beautiful fall in her shoulders, the majestic grace with which she carries her head, and her elastic tread ; she is a charming being ! Don't you see her ? she is next the water, and the gentleman on her right ; she is dressed in blue, with golden hair, and splendid diamonds."

"I see her," answered Marshall ; "she is a radiant girl."

"Girl !" exclaimed Lillywhyte : "you must be looking at the wrong person ; oh, I see ; there is a slight-looking girl in blue, with red—with bright hair, leaning on an elderly lady. Now the woman I mean is walking with a tallish man, who has dark eyes, a high pale forehead, and a profusion of hair."

"I know perfectly," said the umbra ; "she is the one I mean."

"And you call her a girl !"

"Well, and I dare say she is."

"How can you be so dull? Did you ever see a girl with such a developed form as that? look at the luxurious swell of her bosom; the waist just as small as it ought to be, and below it,—such a circle!"

In short he continued to describe the lines of beauty that bounded Mrs Davenport's figure with a minuteness that we must not pursue.

"Well, well, I knock under," said Marshall. "Her husband, too, is very good-looking."

"Her husband! where is he?" cried Lord Lillywhyte.

"She is leaning on him, I presume," answered the other.

"'Pon my honour you would provoke any one!" exclaimed his Lordship, theatrically laying his hand on his heart. "You drive me to my oath. I would call you a stupid awes if I picked my words out of your vocabulary. How can you think that man her husband? Do you notice the way in which he is looking at her? I can tell you that is not the mode in which a husband looks at his wife.

He continued to study the unconscious pair.

"Why, he is fascinated with her; he is madly in love with her; and mark how she is gazing up at him with her celestial blue eyes!"

"For all that he may be her husband," said Marshall, who was annoyed at being always proved a blockhead, and thought he had better show a little fight.

"Well, I shall never make any hand of you!" cried Lillywhyte. "Granting this is a secluded part of the country, and the inhabitants somewhat primitive,—men have the feelings of human beings everywhere, and do you suppose a fellow would be so lost to all sense of the ridiculous as to go on in such a manner with his wife in a public assembly? Why not stay at home and coo to their heart's content? Ay, and now I think of it, they were together in the reception-room too, for I saw them sitting on the same sofa, apart from the rest. Pray, don't you suppose a man would have more self-respect than to make this exhibition of himself? What will you bet that she is his wife? twenty pounds?"

"Pshaw! they are not worth betting on," answered Marshall, to whom an occasional invitation of this kind was the only drawback to the intimacy with his Lordship.

"They are as well worth betting on as a pair of race horses," said the other.

"In fact, I want my money; I am going to Windermere next month, and twenty pounds would be convenient for boats and guides."

If he had said he wanted it for the entire excursion, he would have told the truth.

"Since you are sure of losing your money, you have yielded the point in debate," said Lillywhyte.

"Hang it, let me alone for a minute that I may study them; perhaps I may come round to your opinion," said Marshall, a little peevishly.

"She has dropped her handkerchief!" cried Lillywhyte, "watch them now."

Campbell picked it up directly, and switched her on the neck with it; he then pretended to give it to her, but held it fast all the time. She dived with her little hand into his in order to force it away, and he kept toying with her fingers for some moments before he would restore it.

"I give up," said Marshall; "look at the by-play of their eyes; I dwell more on that than on the manœuvring of their hands."

"Then I don't," said Lillywhyte; "but I am glad you have come round to reason on any terms. She is an angel, and I'll be hanged if I won't daunce with her; that chap, whoever he is, shall not have her the whole night, I can promise him. They will soon be commencing a new set, and I will get Mrs Neville to introduce me."

"And what shall I do with myself?" asked the umbra piteously.

"Daunce with that little bit of blue twine that was dangling on mamma's arm, but do not be our vis-à-vis," and he went off laughing.

Shortly after this, while Campbell and Milly were still walking about, little dreaming they had been the objects of such scrutiny, Mrs Neville came up to them leaning on Lord Lillywhyte's arm. She introduced him to Mrs Davenport, and then joined a group of ladies near her. His Lordship requested the honour of Mrs Davenport's hand for the next quadrille, and she assented rather gladly, for she was uneasy at spending so much

of the evening with Campbell alone. She withdrew her arm from his.

"You cannot dance in your scarf," said he, "shall I keep it for you until you want it again?"

"Do, please." She then added in a lower voice, and with a peculiar look,—“Perhaps I shall never see it again.”

"It will be restored the moment you claim it," said he, with a smile, "it is a deposit; the apron was a waif."

While they were whispering, Lord Lillywhyte stood perfectly patient: he thought it but natural that they should have some last words. Finally, Campbell gave her up to him, and before parting, totally oblivious of where he was, he shook hands with her. She blushed deeply as she gave her arm to her partner, and he looked enraptured at her lovely, modest, innocent face. He thought that for the sake of being loved by her he would even consent that his uncle should rise from the dead, if a demon were to offer him those conditions.

He was going to say something when Juno appeared before them, leaning on Lord Olford.

"Oh, Mrs Davenport," she cried, "I was going to seek for you, and to say that Lord Olford wishes for the pleasure of dancing the next quadrille with you; but I suppose you are engaged to Lord Lillywhyte."

Mrs Davenport assented to the supposition.

"Well, then, the next polka?"

"I dance quadrilles only."

Miss Neville was determined to keep her from Campbell for the rest of the night, if she could. "I hope, since I have promised Lord Olford the pleasure of dancing with you, that you will not disappoint him; say the next quadrille."

Mrs Davenport consented, and Lord Olford engaged her.

Miss Neville passed on to the eastern saloon, still attended by her admirer; she wanted to see what was become of Campbell. She soon spied him conversing with a group of gentlemen, and Mrs Davenport's scarf on his arm. So there he stood, wearing his lady's favour. Of course she had been with him to the last, and left this garment in his care. How provoking! If she had been a few minutes earlier she would have found them together, would have dismissed the lady to dance with Lord Olford, and would then have invited Campbell to walk about with her. Now it was impossible to go near him, and Lord Olford was pertina-

ciously cleaving to her. Was it not strange that she could not manage to speak a word or two to the Northwood physician, and all the highest men in the room soliciting a gracious look, thankful for a few minutes' conversation. She could not divest herself of the conviction that this man did not care for a gracious look—did not want to enjoy her conversation. How could she persevere in pursuing him? She seemed so depressed that Lord Olford feared she had over-exerted herself. He advised her to sit down, but there were no seats in the saloon, as it was entirely designed for a promenade, and yet she wished to keep her eye on Campbell. At last she sat down on a bench in the dancing-room near the archway; Lord Olford placed himself beside her; her little mace-bearers stood near her, and so she shone in her splendid misery.

Shortly after Dr Campbell had joined the knot of gentlemen with whom Miss Neville saw him conversing, Mr Davenport arrived from the refreshment-room much recruited in spirits.

"Well, Galen, where is your charge?"

"She is gone to dance with Lord Lillywhyte, and here is her scarf as a pledge that she will return for its sake if not for yours."

"Dancing with Lord Lillywhyte? all right! You keep the scarf; I should lose it."

He then glanced his eye round the circle of gentlemen, and accosted a tall, stout, heavy-faced man, who had got the nickname of the "Big Nothing," as he was in the habit of making pompous speeches, which he meant to be very profound and ethical, but which were chiefly remarkable for being wordy, commonplace, and vain.

"Ha! how do you do, Perkins, my good fellow? I did not know you were here."

"I am not surprised at that, Mr Davenport; I have not made myself conspicuous; I have been rather intent on studying the various aspirants around me who have ventured to assume a character foreign from their own."

"And how are they performing their parts?" inquired a gentleman.

"Indifferently indeed, sir. There is an element of idiosyncrasy, or a weakness of human nature, ever working its way to the surface through the superimposed garb of hero, goddess, saint, and sage. There is a monk over there making love furiously. A goddess has been just carried out fainting, overpowered by the

weight of what she would make believe was imponderable vapour. And there is a Coriolanus, gentlemen, in the hall (he whispered to me who he was ; to tell the truth, I thought him a Quixote), who is making very grand speeches ; but when his mother and wife came up to him—(mark, his veritable wife and mother), and stated that they were tired, and would wish to go home soon—he bid them—go be damned ! I regret much being obliged to repeat such offensive language, but I want to show how hard it is to keep a single infirmity of temper in check for a single hour.”

“ Why did not you come in some character yourself, Perkins,” said a gentleman, “ and show how you can part with identity, and bid defiance to your besetting sin for an indefinite period ? ”

“ Preserve me from intruding on the character of another ! ” said Mr Perkins, with a solemn shake of the head. “ I have been confided to myself, gentlemen, and the trust is one that takes every moment of my life to discharge conscientiously. To walk through the world preserving Peter Perkins true to every religious, moral, and social law, is my ambition as it is my humble boast. No, not for an instant would I chloroform my own character, and seek to blend myself into the sophistry of the Greek, the heartless and rigid heroism of the Roman, or the senseless asceticism of the monk. Still less would I degrade myself by playing the Pagan deity. My aim is never to forget myself, but unswervingly to do my duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me.”

“ Capital, Perkins ! ” said an intimate of his. “ I did not know you had your Catechism so well. Did you say it to the parson last Sunday ? ”

Mr Davenport thought it time to show a little zeal in the cause for which he had ostensibly come. “ I beg, sir, you will not speak with levity of the most perfect manual whereby to regulate life, that was ever put into a Christian’s hand.”

“ I had no intention of doing so, sir,” said the other, stiffly.

Campbell grew uneasy. “ Davenport, when do you think of ordering the carriage ? ” said he.

“ Not while my wife is dancing, I should just hope. What a hurry you are in back to Mr Lackheart ! ”

“ Lackheart ! ” exclaimed Mr Perkins, with the same impassible expression of face and erect deportment ; “ I never heard of such a name in all my life ! Perhaps you mean Lockhart ; that

was the name of Sir Walter Scott's son-in-law ; a very able man, but a good deal eclipsed by the proximity of such a dazzling star." Then turning round his whole body to Campbell, as if he had a wooden pelerine and collar on, he said to him, " If you have left your friend Lockhart at your own house by himself, Dr Campbell, you have been guilty of a most unnecessary piece of impoliteness, for Miss Neville would have been most happy to see him."

" I doubt that very much," said Davenport, laughing.

" I assure you, sir, she pressed me to bring any friend I might have in the house, and even to write for my nephews, if I thought they would wish to attend her ball."

Davenport rejoined : " His friend wears no clothes, so I don't say that it would be quite proper to bring him."

" No clothes !"

" No ; and he is far too naked to be ashamed, as a poet says," added Campbell.

The other gentlemen enjoyed the joke, but Mr Perkins continued to look stolidly puzzled, when Major Smyth limped up to them, leaning on Mr James.

" I hope, my friends," cried the Major, " that you think I am doing my part well ; I came here as a gouty man. Ha, ha, ha !"

" Your costume is not correct," observed Campbell ; " your legs should be enveloped in flannel."

" I have plenty of it, I can assure you, inside my trowsers. Will you credit me for that ? Ha, ha, ha !"

" And what have you come as, Mr James ?" said Davenport, turning to that gentleman.

" Don't you see he has come as a magpie ?" roared the Major. " Look sharp to your rings, gentlemen ! Ha, ha, ha !"

On this evening Mr James wore a white waistcoat and black coat and trowsers. Mr Perkins turned slowly round to Mr James with an air of increased solemnity : " If, sir, as your friend asserts, you have come here to-night in the character of magpie, unaccompanied by any other gentleman to act in conjunction with you as second magpie (and I see no one in the rooms dressed like you), permit me to say you have acted at least very thoughtlessly, if not in a most injudicious manner."

The listeners set up a shout of laughter at the ludicrousness of this speech, but the deliverer of it seemed quite unconscious of being ridiculed. Mr James, having stared at him for a moment, showed an inclination to treat him with silent contempt, but

the rest were not equally disposed to let the amusement drop so suddenly. One of them cried out : " Mr Perkins, your words are, I am sure, very pithy, if you would just let us more into the exact meaning of them."

He readily explained :—" Sir, there are strange superstitions afloat about magpies ; and women, in consequence of the weakness of their minds, share all the prejudices of the vulgar respecting those ominous birds. When they appear about a house, much is augured regarding the numbers in which they are found. Unquestionably you all have heard the couplet,—

" One for sorrow, two for mirth ;
Three for wedding, four for birth.

More than four at a time are rarely seen, for they are a scarce bird. Now you, Mr James, having come here a lonely magpie, without one more (or two, which would have been better) along with you, are a harbinger of woe to this house in the vulgar opinion, and in the feminine one too. So no doubt Miss Neville feels very painful presentiments whenever her eye catches your costume, standing, as you do, a single magpie."

Volleys of laughter followed this explanation, but the speaker was quite unmoved by them. Mr James looked foolish and annoyed, and felt inclined to take the matter seriously ; but on second thoughts he recollected that such a course would afford still more glee to the audience, so he said, in a bantering manner, " Well, sir, if you think it good, I will retire and change my dress, or endeavour to procure two other magpies as silly as myself."

" Too late, too late !" said Mr Perkins, waving his hand ; " the votaries of this belief would say that the shaft is already sped which was to come laden with sorrow to the house of Neville."

An indescribable feeling came over Dr Campbell, which he would not permit himself to analyse, but which was anything but a comfortable one.

" Well," said Davenport, " as we are talking about magpies, I have only to say that all that stuff about them is out of date now ; we have sorrow enough without their visits, and births in plenty, I can vouch."

" Indeed," said Mr James, " I am not very apprehensive but that Miss Neville will have much happiness quite independent of me, and the character Major Smyth has been pleased to fasten on me."

"Not so, my dear fellow, not so," cried the Major; "you should hope that a great deal of Miss Neville's happiness *will* be dependent on you. Ha, ha, ha!"

Before the Major's thunders of self-applause had ceased Mercury came flying into the saloon, looking for Dr Campbell. Having found him, he said, "Do, pray, come to poor Sophia Ridley; she fainted lately, and we took her to the steps of the front door and she recovered; but now she is hysterical, and we do not know where her married sister is, who chaperones her—dancing, I suppose."

"I thought, by something that inflated booby Perkins said just now, that she was taken ill. Is not she Iris?" said Campbell.

"Oh yes; she is pretty well tired of her bow."

They hastened off, and passed quickly by Miss Neville, who was still seated near the archway: she did not fail to see them. They found poor Iris sitting in the open air on a chair, and attended by two maid-servants. Campbell dismissed them, and took charge of the young lady himself. Her rainbow was lying at a distance on the gravel, having been kicked as far off as possible by Charles. Dr Campbell took her hand, and let her rest her head against his side.

"My poor child! I knew you were not equal to the task you imposed on yourself, of keeping your arms elevated for so long a time, and holding that unwieldy pasteboard thing over your head."

It was beautiful and touching to see the kind and paternal manners of this attractive man—the idol of women, and a study for a limner—when he was called to exercise his professional duties. He continued—

"Why did not you choose something easier? you are growing still, and are not strong."

"Oh, I think I have done growing, sir; I am full sixteen. We heard Miss Neville intended to perform Juno, and mamma said if I would try and do Iris she would be much pleased, and pay me great attention, and have me near her all night, and bring me into notice with every one; so I did my best to please Miss Neville, and kept as close to her as I had courage to do; but she scarcely looked at me, and attended only to young Mr Routledge, and made him go all her messages: the only notice she took of me was to send me word by him to beware and not break the lustres with my *hoop*." Here her tears flowed afresh.

"But you must stop crying," said Campbell; "a person who is 'full sixteen' should have more philosophy. Miss Neville has so many things to attend to she must be neglectful in some cases."

Though he said this, he thought that lady very ill-natured not to give poor Sophy a glance of patronage or a word of recognition.

"Are you better now?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, much better; you are so kind."

"Come, then, go first into the refreshment-room and get your hair and dress arranged, and I will afterwards walk about with you until you are quite well, and then you must have a dance; would not you like that?"

"I think I should."

She departed, and shortly returned with the sunny smile on her face which is so soon restored to the brow of innocent youth by a cordial word from those whom they admire and respect. He took her into the ball-room. The quadrilles in which Mrs Davenport had been dancing with Lord Lillywhyte were ended, and a new set had been commenced instead of the intended polka. Miss Neville had professed to make this change to accommodate Mrs Davenport, who was engaged to Lord Olford, and objected to any kind of waltzing; but it was really to get rid of both her and his Lordship, as soon as possible, that she might have Campbell unoccupied, and be herself free from the attentions of her noble suitor. Sq Milly and Lord Olford were dancing together, and Davenport was carrying on an animated conversation with Lord Lillywhyte, whose acquaintance he had made when he went to receive his wife from her partner. Miss Neville declined dancing, and was beginning to attract notice by the dejection that sat upon her brow. As she was leaning pensively against the side of the archway she suddenly came face to face with Campbell and Sophia Ridley, on their way to the saloon. She started and coloured. So he had got a new charge! and the very girl of all in the room whom she held in most contempt!

"Miss Ridley! I was sorry to hear the heat had overcome you; I hope you are recovered."

"Quite well, thank you," answered Sophy.

"Yes," said Campbell, "she is much better, at least; I have

been talking to her, and am now going to give her a little promenade."

"Ah! you can heal by mere words," said Miss Neville, in a tone and manner that might have admitted of various interpretations.

"She did not require the aid of science; she wanted nothing but kindness," answered he, in a rather pointed way, and walked on quickly.

She felt inclined to dash either him or herself into the canal behind her. He not only avoided her, but he had actually rebuked her in her own house—in the centre of her glory, when every other man in the room was echoing her lightest word. Who would have imagined that he either knew or cared how she had treated Sophia Ridley? But still he had been watching her, while he seemed taken up with Mrs Davenport, and he was vexed with her apparently; did not that show that he took a peculiar interest in her? And he had just now half upbraided her—her, whom all the rest were loading with flattery! Was not that like a man who deemed he had some right to do what no one else would have dared? Was he not like an accepted lover, who was grieved at her short-comings, and reprimanded her from the fulness of his heart? To these wild arguments she madly resorted, as she stood with aching head and trembling limbs gazing vacantly at the dancers.

Dr Campbell in the mean time, having supplied Sophy with negus and fruit, endeavoured to amuse her as well as he could. A little ballad-singer was at the bottom of the saloon, singing most delightfully, with a crowd about her. In the intervals of her song she sold ballads to the gentlemen, who paid her with grapes, and plums, and nuts, which she flung back again at them. Campbell, attracted by the sweetness of her voice, proposed that they should go nearer to her, and they accordingly joined the group. She was seated on a camp-stool, and held a guitar in her hand, on which she accompanied herself. When she next looked up from under her coquettish straw-hat, Campbell recognised Mrs Parker in a new character. He regretted he had come into her neighbourhood, for he did not desire to have the gipsy drama acted over again. She caught his eye, and cried,—

"Ha! I am happy to behold you once more! have you been

hiding, like Saul, 'among the stuff,' when 'the desire of all Israel is on thee?' I am a wandering minstrel, who have been performing mine office most generously; I have just sung two songs; men say that you cannot be surpassed in this art; do, pray, sing something for us."

"I nowhere read that Saul was a vocalist," answered he; "so, with your permission, I will avail myself of the character with which you have half invested me."

"Ha! little syren," cried Mr Routledge, who was standing near, "you made a provoking mistake; if you had happened to assimilate him in any way to David, he could not possibly have refused."

"No *soubriquet* will make me sing to-night, for I am determined not to do so," said Campbell.

Mr Routledge, who knew by the expression of his face that he would keep to his resolve, said, "Very good; if an instrument is not in tune, let it lie in its case. Come, my syren, give us another of your own effusions."

"Willingly," answered she; "I have kept the best for the last."

She then commenced the following song, it being the same she had composed to Campbell the first day she saw him. She cast soft glances on him as she sang, and looked full as well inclined to make love on her own part as to act proxy for any one.

MRS PARKER'S SONG.

It was not the words you utter'd,
Though they rose like St Agnes' song;
It was not the tones that flutter'd,
Flute-like, those lips along;

'Twas an impulse felt, not spoken,
It shook not the summer air;
No silence deep was broken;
'Twas the look that lingered there.

Like phosphorus light from ocean,
It rose from thy soul's deep well;
It woke in my soul an emotion
That seems both heaven and hell.

It was this—it was this that proved me
A martyr before thy throne;
It was this—it was this that moved me
To make my world thine own.

Worthless that world without thee!
Oh! turn its dross to gold!
And let the spell about thee
My captive life enfold.

She sang these verses with such intense feeling, and in tones so ravishingly sweet, that Campbell, who was passionately fond of vocal music, was for the moment fascinated. He continued to gaze on her after she had finished, in a delightful reverie, with scarcely any idea of where he was, or whether he was looking on a woman or a picture. But not thus did she feel; she lifted her eyes towards him, and saw all the heaven of his face concentrated on her alone. Her cheek burned, but she could not turn away. The cause of her schoolfellow, which she had rather officiously taken upon herself to urge, vanished into thin air. She thus thought: "I would sell my soul for that man! Why should I strain against wind and tide with the idle hope of promoting the interests of Alicia Neville? I did all I could as a gipsy, and he was cold—scornful—almost rude. He does not care for her. I have composed this song to him myself, from the bottom of my heart, and I will not use it as an instrument in her favour. Force him to like her! Impossible! I should only make him hate myself. I'll give up that plan." "That plan" had been to whisper to him, in the same fashion as she had done when gipsy, something in this way: "Look at all around you! it is but dross to its owner; you can 'turn the dross to gold;' " but she shrank in disgust from the project, under the influence of the charm with which he had bound her. And thus melted away a woman's zeal for her female friend, as might be expected when she undertakes the mad task of pleading the cause of that friend with one of the most attractive of the other sex.

The hum of admiration soon roused Campbell from his trance. The gentlemen were in raptures.

"That is the prettiest song you have sung to-night; will you sell it to me?"

"No, no; to me!" They all clamoured to get the copy that she held in her hand.

"It is not mine to give," said she; "but on whom the lot has fallen, the same must have it;"—and she handed it to Campbell.

He accepted it, and said, playfully, for her strains had mollified him, "And what am I to give you for it?"

"Only another look such as you gave me just now."

He turned very red; a consciousness of the manner in which he had been gazing at her was beginning to dawn on him.

"You sing divinely," said he; "and I will keep your song, and whenever I read it the sounds in which it was first conveyed to my ear will seem to vibrate through every word. You must excuse me if I forgot myself a moment or two ago."

"Excuse you! Ah! I will treasure that look longer than you will the song."

Here her husband came up, and she began idly to twang the strings of her guitar.

"Shall we walk about?" said Campbell to Sophy; and he was moving away, but the pressure of the crowd became so great that he was forced to stand still. The quadrilles had now ended, and the dancers were all thronging into the saloon for a promenade by the water's side. Mrs Davenport came attended by both Lord Olford and her husband, and Miss Neville herself came leaning on Mercury: she found him the most convenient escort, for he both saved her from Lord Olford, and she could dismiss him on some message if it was desirable to get rid of him. When they all reached the ring of which Mrs Parker was the centre, some greetings took place. Campbell put Milly's scarf on her shoulders, and hoped she was not tired; she answered that she was. There were but few persons now between Campbell and Sophy on one side, and Miss Neville and Charles on the other. The latter observed:—

"How well Miss Ridley looks! quite recovered."

"Yes," answered Miss Neville; "we had better show her some attention; suppose you ask her to dance the next set with you; that would please her greatly. And take her now from Dr Campbell; she has been on his hands this long time."

Charles, of course, did as he was desired, and received Sophy from Campbell's hands. The latter was free at last, and close to Miss Neville—there was only one between them—when she heard him say to Davenport—

"You had better order the carriage immediately ; Mrs Davenport is tired."

She turned pale. Was he going away? Was it all over? Had the baseless fabric of her vision melted into air—into thin air? Mr Routledge, who, as we have mentioned, was among Mrs Parker's auditors, hastened to give her his arm. More than once during the evening he had felt uneasy about "his queen," and had noticed that something was weighing upon her spirits under all the glitter and the gold.

"I know," said he, "that you are exhausted ; you have been exerting yourself most unmercifully ; do go to your chamber and rest for half an hour, and you will be quite fresh for supper."

"Indeed, I am not at all tired," she answered ; "I was wishing to press Mr and Mrs Davenport to stay for supper."

Mr Routledge looked round. "Here is Mrs Davenport, at least," said he ; and he conducted Miss Neville to her. She was once more leaning on Campbell ; her husband had disappeared. Miss Neville entreated of her to wait for supper ; she answered her, with thanks, that she felt quite unable.

"And will you go away along with your friends?" said Miss Neville to Campbell.

"Oh! yes, I will," answered he, with the same sweet look with which he should have accompanied the great "*I will*."

She could not at that moment decide whether she felt most inclined to stab him or to fall down at his feet and worship him. Her action was to draw back haughtily, and stand resolute, and motionless as a statue. The most consummate actress could not have better represented Juno—Juno at the moment in which she is supposed to say—

Mene incepto desistere victam,
Nec posse Italia Teucrorum avertere regem?

At this juncture Mrs Major Smyth bustled up. "Why I thought you were all warbling like nightingales here, but I find you as dull as if you were at a funeral. Mrs Parker, are you tired singing?"

"Yes, ma'am, quite," answered she, her mind still wandering back to the brief dialogue she had held with Campbell.

"Come then, Olford," said Mrs Smyth, to her cousin, "will you put some life in us? you will not refuse to sing."

"Do, pray," said Mr Routledge, "give us that pretty song you sang at my house on Monday evening."

"Pardon me," said Mrs Smyth, "but he has a still better one;" and she whispered something to him of which "that Hymn to Juno" was all that could be heard.

"I will not sing unless Juno herself commands me," said he, bowing to Miss Neville.

"Why should I deny my friends a pleasure for which I see their expectations are wrought up?" said she languidly, and on this cold permission he commenced his song, Mrs Parker having resigned to him the camp-stool, and the guitar on which he wished to accompany himself.

LORD OLFORD'S SONG TO JUNO.

My soul is hovering o'er thee,
Oh, may it mix with thine?
Or only kneel before thee,
And worship at thy shrine?

Stand'st thou at earth's dark portals
Descended from above,
To tell presumptuous mortals
They must adore, not love?

If thou art more than human,
Give back to heaven its own:
But if thou art a woman,
Ah, be but that alone!

That eye's imperial splendour
Awakes no awe, no fears;
Most conqueror when most tender,
True despot when in tears.

E'en now I see thee reeling
Beneath the false divine;
Earth's gentle shadows stealing
Along that brow of thine.

Oh, rest upon man's bosom,
There is thy native home;
And let the vain who choose 'em
To heights Olympic roam!

When his voice first rose it seemed like Dr Campbell's, but its inferiority in richness, compass, and flexibility soon became apparent. However, the resemblance immediately attracted Miss Neville's notice, and the sentiments expressed still further riveted her attention. Oh ! if it was Campbell himself really uttering those words from his heart ! what bliss ! She closed her eyes, as willing for a moment to realize the vision of her fancy. As she listened, with all external objects shut out from her ken, the delusion apparently increased, and by the expression of her still softening and blanching face, a looker-on might have argued that the goddess was veritably and rapidly ebbing back into the woman, under the irresistible exorcism of the song.

When Lord Olford ended he cast down his eyes, and became much agitated. He had looked at her several times while he was singing, and from the changes in her countenance he grew convinced that she was not insensible to the emotions which prompted the rhymes. On her side, the last verse of the song had shaken her soul to its centre ;—by the spring of her imagination she lapped herself for an instant in Elysium, and hailed the voice of Campbell pouring itself into her heart with that sacred call to nestle in his for ever. For a few seconds after Lord Olford ceased to sing there was as usual a dead silence, and this, with a power stronger than sound, aroused Miss Neville from her trance. She opened her eyes, and met Campbell's intently fixed on her. He saw there was some strange struggle of feelings going on within her, and expecting she would be in some manner overcome, he watched her with that anxiety that belonged to his profession—wondering too at the effects produced on her by the words of a man whom, he was convinced, she did not love.

But that gaze was too much for nerves already strung to a pitch that would bear no further tension. With a slight moan she fell in a deep faint on the shoulder of Mr Routledge. Lord Olford was electrified :—the shaft had certainly reached its aim—but what if it had at the same time drunk her life-blood ? He rushed towards her, and so did several others.

"Quietly now, my friends, quietly,"—said Mr Routledge ; "do not bring two hundred people about her. Leave her to the doctor and me, and—where is her mother, or her sister ?"

They were not forthcoming, but Miss Cope was on the spot directly, having been hovering near her patroness the whole

evening, the one in the room best acquainted with the state of her mind, and most uneasy about her.

"That will do," said Mr Routledge ; " we three will manage her ;—Charles, let the dancing go on as if nothing had happened ; she will be well presently."

Campbell hastened to Miss Neville, having consigned Milly to Charles's spare arm, and he and Mr Routledge carried the prostrate Juno out by the lower door of the saloon into the open air. They kept her there for a few minutes, and then Campbell proposed taking her into the grapery where she might be laid flat on her back. This was done, and Miss Cope brought cold water, and Campbell dashed large quantities on her face, little regarding her head-dress.

"How long she continues insensible !" said Mr Routledge.

"Yes," said Campbell, " however, I don't mind that much, but she looks so very ghastly." He seemed nervous and uneasy.

"She does not breathe freely," observed Mr Routledge.

"That is the fact of it," said Campbell, and he took out his penknife.

"What ! are you going to bleed her ? is she so bad ?" cried Mr Routledge.

"No," said Campbell, with the same sort of look with which he had asked Miss Maria Neville the meaning of "dyspepsio." "You mistake a penknife for a lancet."

Mr Routledge winced a little, and fell back, determined to ask no further questions. In a few minutes Campbell called to him ; "Mr Routledge, she is recovering !"

He ran to her eagerly, saying, "Thank Heaven !"

When she opened her eyes she saw the three bending over her. She looked wildly about : "Where am I ?"

"In your own green-house," said Campbell ; "you were overcome by the heat, and we brought you here ; you will soon be quite well."

That voice restored her ; it was the Samaritan's oil and wine ; the prophet's butter and honey. She sat erect with the assistance of Miss Cope. Mr Routledge seeing her safe, with instinctive delicacy prepared to withdraw.

"Now I will leave you to your physician and your friend, and. I will not mention to any one that you fainted."

"Thank you," she answered, "that is just what I wish ; I will return to the ball-room presently."

Mr Routledge went out at the door by which they had entered, and Campbell locked it after him lest any idlers from the saloon might happen to drop in, as the Bradfords and he himself with Milly had done some time before. The door at the other end of the graperies was kept open to let in fresh air. While Campbell was thus engaged, Miss Neville endeavoured to regain her feet, which she did, and supported herself on Miss Cope's arm. But as soon as she stood erect, the cestus of Venus, laden with gems and embroidery, dropped heavily to the ground; and with it seemed to vanish all the divinity of the so-called goddess—her high bearing, her haughtiness, her imperial glance, her aerial tread. She stood a feeble, trembling, drooping, pale woman propped by an arm that seemed little less weak than her own. But why did the cestus fall off? Simply because Campbell, unable to find the fastenings, had cut it asunder with his penknife, convinced that it was this which impeded her respiration and seriously retarded her recovery from the swoon. Little he thought of costly adornments when existence itself was at stake! It is the boldness of physicians far oftener than their skill that preserves life in cases which appear to us so marvellous.

But was it come to this? and had he actually unbound her zone, and was it to be still hypothetical in what relation he was to stand to her? Would a witness of what occurred in that brief moment have been asked to produce any stronger evidence? O human testimony! unstable as water, never to be relied on! On how much slighter grounds than these has a complicated fabric of assertions been built which it is deemed sacrilege to question! From how much feebler premises have the most positive conclusions been drawn! With such a picture as that how many histories have been closed, leaving it to Fatuity herself only to ask any further question! Campbell having returned to his patient's side, and seeing her well enough to take a restorative, sent Miss Cope for some wine. And now Miss Neville was alone with him at last! She sat down on the bottom step of the flower-stand and he stood close to her, but neither spoke a word until Miss Cope returned with a decanter and glass. He then made her take two glasses of wine, and in a few minutes she felt almost as well as usual. Miss Cope had vanished, and again they were alone. Providence, she thought, had brought about what she had been labouring for, and had nearly despaired of attaining. But had her brilliant entertainment roused his admiration and ambition, and would he thank

her more now for the offer of her heart than if she had laid it at his feet a month ago? She knew and felt he would not, and she wondered at her former infatuation—her absurd estimate of such a man as that. What should she do?

He spoke first. "Now you had better go to your apartment and have your hair and neck dried, or you may catch cold. Indeed you have occasion to change your entire dress, if you mean to appear again, for I have been very disrespectful to it."

"What matter about my dress being spoiled?" she cried, sickening at the manner in which he spoke of it when her mind was in such a state.

He looked anxiously at her. "In fact I think you had better not join the company again to-night, you are scarcely able."

"I will,—I will; I'll dress immediately, and take my place at the supper-table, and you shall sit by me, and then I shall fear nothing."

He changed colour and his voice faltered a little. "I cannot possibly do so."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, as she drew a long breath, and laid her head against a fuchsia crock that was on a tier behind her. It was a hard pillow, and with her dripping hair, her tiara awry, and her dress crumpled, she looked more like a desolate outcast who had laid herself at her betrayer's door to die, than a proud-souled woman with virtue, high position, and wealth all her own.

He ran to her and took her hand; she clasped his convulsively.

"Let me entreat of you to go to your bed directly," said he.

She did not appear to hear his last words, but looking at him wildly said: "How can you refuse such a simple request?"

"My party are determined not to remain, and if they go with-out me I shall have no means of getting home."

"Home! home! there is a room ready for you here;—stay here,—to-night, —to-morrow,—let this be your home for ever!—Good God! Answer me!"

He dropped her hand, staggered back a few paces, and leaning against the wall of the grapery, put his handkerchief to his forehead. He was not wavering but thunderstruck; he never dreamt that it would have come to this. When he recovered himself he took down his hand; she was looking fixedly at him with the expression of a martyr who is resolved to die at the stake without a groan.

"Miss Neville ! I do not intend ever to marry : be assured of this ; I will never marry any one on earth."

He said no more : he neither offered her his friendship, nor thanked her for the honour she had done him, nor swore that he would remember her for ever, nor made any of those speeches which are worse than the bitterest mockery to souls far less deep even than hers. She lost her sight for a few moments, but soon, too soon, she recovered it again, and when she gazed on the spot whence those words had proceeded, there was no one to be seen there. Then there followed an instant or two of great stillness ; she was conscious of existence, but her heart appeared to have stopped beating and her blood to have ceased to flow. But still she could see : she knew she saw the vine-leaves and grapes hanging from the branches opposite to her, and through them—she could not be mistaken—flashed two eyes full of softness, but very resolute,—earnestly fixed on her : they shone with love and feeling, but it was not love and feeling for her ;—oh, no ! but they would not vanish,—suspended in the air, or upheld by the foliage—she knew not which ; there was no figure, no face to which they could belong. Then they began gradually to grow more faint, and at last to be absorbed by two large heavy purple lack-lustre grapes which seemed to stare at her with a leaden force that took away her breath. How long this condition lasted she could not tell ; was it for a few minutes, or a few hours, or a few days ? She knew not ; she seemed to have no further relations with time. By degrees her mind began to gather power to face the demon that had invaded it, and her heart to fit itself to the hideous deformity that had thrust itself into its recesses. Her idol had refused her, and was gone ! Refused her ! and where was her pride ? Would she not entrench herself within the citadel of her dignity, hurl defiance at him, and show him that she could still be happy, independent of his scorn ?—No :—pride had no existence in the face of the scathing thought that he was gone for ever ! Ay ; that thought was the thunderbolt that blasted her frame to atoms. See him no more ; that was an impossibility ; she must see him again, if it was only for an instant.

She made a wild spring to the door of the grapery which was adjoining the saloon—it was still locked ; she turned the key, and that simple mechanical action brought her a little to her senses. She even thought she heard footsteps approaching and she locked it again in horror, and stood stupid and motionless, but still listening. As we have already said, there was only a

narrow walk between the door where she stood and that of the saloon, so she could hear the various sounds that proceeded from the scene of revelry. Merry notes floated from the ball-room, for the dancing had re-commenced, and the orchestra was alive with music. Music?—no: it was the shrieking of damned spirits. A hum of voices came from the saloon, light sounds of mirth and jest,—all that indicates the presence of a multitude enjoying itself. What could be the meaning of this? how could any one take any interest in anything? But these were not her fellow-creatures, it was the kingdom of Satan that had been let loose on her in her own halls. Nay, but she could hear the ringing laugh of Mrs Parker as she continued to float down the uninterrupted stream of her joyous existence. And what was her own world now? a chaotic mass;—the poles dashed into the equator, and pale ghastly blocks of ice driving, tearing, plunging through her groves of mango, her clumps of palm trees, her olive yards, and her gardens of roses and pomegranates. She felt sensible of a dull buzzing sound in her ears,—was she going to faint again? No: it was the hiss of the icy glacier as it rolled heavily along the roasting sands of Africa. Suddenly she felt as if a demon was grasping her round the temples. She put up her hand, and found that the tiara which had been deranged when she fainted was falling heavily to one side. Who had dared to put this iron crown upon her head? She tore it off, and the golden veil with it, and dashed them to the other end of the grapery. The pins that were fastening up her hair were pulled out by this violence, and her fair, dripping locks tumbled in disorder on her shoulders. She felt herself staggering, and had just power to crawl to the flower-stand where the wine had been left, and to take a glass of it. Demented as she was, she had reason enough remaining to dread fainting a second time, and being found senseless by perhaps half her guests. Her strength returned a little, and she went and stood at the open window of the grapery. She looked up to Heaven in her helplessness (as all in her condition do, whether they hope for succour or not), and saw the constellation of Perseus gleaming and flashing high above her, and the stars which form Andromeda stretching on to the right. Since she came to the country Mr James had taught her the names and position of several stars.

“Ay, there you are!” she thought, “bright and glorious as when last I contemplated you, and prayed with my light, un-

thinking heart that my lot in life might be as blessed as yours ! Love, love, love ! the spangled firmament itself is alive with love ; every refulgent spark is a burning word in the story of human passion. Who dares to say that the human heart should be ashamed of you,—deny you,—seek to quench you ? . . . He loves me not ! Does that consciousness give me power to resist the spiritual influence of my Creator ? to annihilate the transcendent stirrings of my soul ? . . . He loves me not ! . . . I may not live and die with him, but I will die for him if he speaks the word,—I would decimate yonder mob, if thus I could save a hair of his head from perishing."

While absorbed in these wild thoughts which still were better than her former ravings, she heard a voice behind her : "O my dear Miss Neville !" She started ; it was Miss Cope, with look aghast, holding in her hand the tiara over which she had stumbled when she came in at the lower door.

"Leave me—leave me—alone—always alone."

Miss Cope could not answer her at first, she was so astounded at her appearance. Her eyes looked like flints ; her head, stripped of all its ornaments, was thrown back as she looked defiance at the intruder ; her hair was streaming to her waist, her cestus was gone, and her rich robe was smeared and crushed though still heavy with its golden crocuses ; and her whole figure was rigid and angular. But there was not much time to be lost.

"Do let me speak, Miss Neville !" resumed Miss Cope ; "Dr Campbell has told your mother—"

"Hush ! if you dare to utter that name—"

"Oh Heaven ! they are coming !" interrupted Miss Cope.

"Who are coming ?"

"Mrs Neville and your sister have been informed of your illness, and they, and Mrs Major Smyth, and Mrs Routledge, and a whole troop of them are coming here to inquire into your state, and surely you would not wish them to find you in such a condition. Lord Olford himself threatens to come—"

"Lord Olford !" shrieked Miss Neville, grasping her informant's arm. They had just time to escape before the arrival of the ladies. Miss Cope hurried her unhappy patroness out of the grapery, round to the backyard, and entering the house by the basement story, they gained the bed-room unobserved. Miss Neville fell on the couch and was seized with a violent fit of shivering ; her mother, her sister, and her waiting-maid were

soon at her side ; she did not speak, and all attributed her indisposition to over-exertion. They put her into a warm bed, and she grew more composed. Her mother would not leave her, and it was arranged that Maria and Mr and Mrs Parker should bring the entertainment to as successful a conclusion as the shock just received would allow them. Mrs Neville was urgent to have Dr Campbell brought up to satisfy her that nothing serious was the matter. Miss Cope, who guessed all, protested he had told her that perfect rest was all she required. The mother seemed satisfied, and they both sat down and watched her.

CHAPTER X.

THE FLIGHT.

“Cui me moribundam deseris, hospes ?”—VIRGIL.

DR CAMPBELL, after having uttered his final words to Miss Neville, rushed out at the open door of the grapery, and began to walk up and down in the cool air to recover himself. He felt dreadfully shocked. He had never supposed that her partiality for him (as he was wont to denominate what he struggled in vain not to perceive) would have reached such a climax. It could be no longer denied nor cloaked ; she loved him passionately—with all the abandonment of a woman's soul—or she never would have taken a step so revolting to feminine pride and delicacy. And he had inflicted on her the greatest wound that it is possible for a man to inflict on a woman—a wound which leaves a scar never to be effaced, albeit the affections may gradually be transferred to some other object. A man when refused feels mortified and hurt for a time ; a woman refused is humiliated for life. She can never more feel herself fixed immoveably on the proud pinnacle where to grant is her exclusive privilege, and to sue for favour the meaner lot of him who was born to be her servitor. The thought must ever haunt her, that once in her life she ventured to change places with the more rugged and independent portion of this world's human family ; that she cast her all upon a throw, and lost—lost ! where success itself could not have formed an

adequate justification for the infringement of nature's laws, and for the boldness of taking the initiative in a case where even acquiescence costs modesty a blush, and the act of yielding seems to demand an effort of unwonted resolution. All this Campbell knew and felt deeply, but what could he do? Was he to sell himself when he was unable to give his affections, and sacrifice an entire life to save her from the bitter pangs attendant on a course that she knew was rash, indelicate, and precarious in its chance of success? But he had one consolation at least, he had nothing whatsoever to blame himself for on this occasion; he had given her no cause to imagine he was attached to her and would propose to her if he dared; he had been cold and stiff when he saw her inclined to make advances. Still, he had a strange sort of sensation about his heart. How can a man have any but a tender feeling towards a woman who loves him passionately, and offers him herself, her affections, and her all on earth? But what was all her devotion and all her mundane distinctions compared to giving up Milly for ever? Then he consoled himself with the persuasion that Miss Neville would soon forget him; those ardent and headlong temperaments are generally fickle; she would leave the country, and, after a while, marry some one else; he prayed she might be happy—she deserved it; she was a fine creature certainly; whoever became her husband ought to give her his entire heart; he could not, and he did not merit her.

Some heavy drops of rain began to fall as he was thus musing, and having no hat on he hastened to the house, and entering at the front door passed on to the ball-room, and having found out Mrs Neville, requested of her to attend to her daughter, whom he did not think quite equal to appear again to-night. He shrank as much as possible from observation, for he had a horror of a crowd gathering round him to inquire how he had left the great queen of the festival. His object was to find the Davenports and hurry them home as quickly as possible. He was walking rapidly through the ball-room, when, to his great relief, he found Milly sitting alone on a bench near the archway.

"Oh, Robert!" she cried, "how did you leave Miss Neville? is she dangerously ill?"

"Not at all; why do you think so?"

"Because you look so dreadfully pale. You seem very unwell."

"There is nothing amiss with me, sweet; Miss Neville has

got over her swoon, but she cannot appear again, I believe. I suppose she is gone to bed."

He dropped on the seat beside her, and put his hand to his forehead. She looked uneasily at him.

"Robert, what ails you?"

"Nothing, indeed, my child. Well—come!—put your arm within mine and I shall be better."

She complied directly, and plunged her little hand under his arm, where it nestled against his side as against an old familiar friend, and the white glove, relieved by the black coat, looked like a dove ensconced in a holm-oak. That touch brought him the only balm of which he was then capable; he seemed lost in a trance for a few minutes, then he started.

"Stand up, Milly, we must not *sit* with our arms thus; but fashion, or usage, is so considerate that it will allow you to lean on me when standing. It permits, as you may observe, still further liberties to people when in rapid motion." He smiled bitterly at the waltzers.

"I never saw you so dreadfully pale, at least not for some years. Perhaps you had to carry her up-stairs, and that was quite beyond your strength," observed Mrs Davenport.

He interrupted her, turning red. "No, no,—I had not; she was able to walk. Well, we won't mind talking of her. How gay all those people look! Observe Hermes and Iris, light as air, they seem scarcely to touch the ground; she is all vapour, and he is all wing."

"Yes," said Milly, "their queen's trouble does not seem to weigh heavily on them, but Charles said it was her wish the dancing should go on; so when he went to set matters a-going he left me here to wait for Arthur. How long he is away! it is more than half an hour since he went to order the carriage."

At this instant the truant joined them.

"Ho, there you are! The carriage is at the door. Campbell, how is Miss Neville? Such a *contretems* as that faint was! Is she come back to the company yet? At any rate we had better not mind making her our parting bow; it would only pester her."

The tears came into Campbell's eyes, Davenport was rattling away with such levity. It was something more than a *contretems* which had befallen Miss Neville that night. He answered briefly that she was better. The Davenports walked on, and he followed slowly, giving a parting glance at the place he was leaving

for ever. Not a feeling of regret entered his mind that he had refused the ownership of all that magnificence, and the fair broad lands too that stretched far away on every side ; no, his only pang was caused by the reflection that the young mistress was prostrate in her lonely shame and sorrow, which she might reveal to none ; that to him she must now be nothing ; and that what might have been a happy friendship had come to such a deplorable end. He hastened to join the Davenports. Milly was cloaked and standing near the door ; her husband was chatting to some gentlemen who had been attending on Mrs Davenport, looking for her things, and striving to win a smile from the prettiest woman in the whole assembly. Campbell was going to hand her down the steps, but she shrank back, as they were wet after the late shower, and not to be attempted in thin, unstained satin shoes. Campbell turned rather indignantly to her husband :—

“Davenport ! what were your arms made for ?”

“Made for !” he cried, “why, I should really say to box with,” stretching them out and examining their fine proportions. “Come, will you try a round ?” and he squared at him playfully.

Campbell turned away somewhat contemptuously, and approaching Mrs Davenport, took her up in his arms, and bore her off to the carriage.

“Bravo, Dr Campbell !” cried Mr Davis. “So may zealous knight ever win fair lady !”

Mr Watson alone said “Amen,” the rest preserved a deep silence, some looking fixedly on the too-careless husband, others following with ominous glances the vanishing figure of the too-devoted cavalier. Mrs Davenport’s heart began to palpitate violently when she suddenly found herself grasped by Robert’s arms, and lying on his bosom ; his beat rapidly also ; he was not robust, and at present he was totally unstrung. And so for one instant in Time’s vast round, those two hearts throbbed against one another, which should have been beating together through all the years of this life, and through all the cycles of the world to come.

He placed her in the carriage, returned to the hall, and found Davenport haranguing the gentlemen on the feats performed by his arms at cricket when he was at Shrewsbury school.

“I have Mrs Davenport’s orders to tell you she is waiting.”

“All right ! I am her slave.”

"Better you had been her slave a little sooner," thought the gentlemen.

He shook hands with a dozen of them, and finally took his departure.

When they arrived at Henry-street, Campbell cried, "I must get out here."

"Why, you promised to sup with us!" exclaimed Davenport.

"I am quite unable. I have a great headache."

"Your supper will cure it. Amelia, my soul, why don't you insist on his coming?"

Campbell had left the vehicle by this time, and was standing on the road.

Milly gave him her hand. "You will come to-morrow?"

"If I am able."

He ran in full speed to his cottage, and the Davenports drove on.

He opened his door with a latch-key, and sank down in the hall; his strength was almost gone. Rachel appeared directly with a light.

"What in the world made you sit up for me? I told you to go to bed, and that I would light a candle for myself."

"Was it not as good, dear?" (She often called him so, and he did not chide her.) "I never could have slept, but now I shall be comfortable, seeing you arrived safe. But what ails you?"

"Nothing at all. Where is that slop you generally make for me?"

"Dear bless me! Aint that unlucky? This is the first night I ever missed having it! Why, the feasting that was to be at that place to-night—the waggon-loads of dainties, the floods of wine—have not they been the talk of all Northwood for the last week? Oh dear! I thought you'd have been fairly surfeited! I said to myself, 'Now, if I hand him my stuff when he comes in, he ought to throw it in my face, though he is not the man that would.'"

"Don't talk so, Rachel; I have eaten nothing since I saw you, and I am very tired. What have you?"

"Nothing, as I hope to live, but cold mutton!"

"Bring it then, and do hold your tongue."

She brought it, together with some stale bread, and laid them down, full of amazement, but without daring to question him. And so supped the adored of Juno: it was rugged fare, but with liberty.

Meantime Maria Neville, assisted by the Parkers, was using

all her energies to conclude the entertainment without any sensible effect being felt by the disastrous disappearance of Juno from the scene. She was very proud in her own way, and would have been deeply mortified if the winding-up of this grand display had been marked by anything bordering on a failure. If there was to be any formidable "but" towards the conclusion of a florid description given by a guest of the festivities—if her sister was to be made a nine days' wonder, instead of an object of admiration and envy—she would have been ready to leave the country in her mortification and wrath. Miss Cope had given her a hint that something had occurred between Dr Campbell and Miss Neville, and she immediately began to act with as much judgment as she was able. She assured every one that her sister had been simply over-fatigued by standing so long receiving her company, and then dancing without any rest; and that though she had fainted at the end of the evening, she was now quite well enough to return to her guests, but that her mother was so uneasy she was obliged to keep her room to please her. The absence of Mrs Neville herself, when, by this account, her daughter required no particular attention, was mysterious, and for this Maria could not attempt to account.

The Olympian repast was served up with all due pomp and display. Three tables, laid in the quondam drawing-room, were crowded with occupants, who, however they might have differed in their sentiments during the evening (some preferring to appear in character, some not; some liking to dance, others to sit still; others to walk about and converse), were all perfectly unanimous in the one grand object which now absorbed their attention. It is pleasant to see our fellow-creatures harmoniously converging to the same point in any aspect of their existence. The common ground of gastrology prevents men from tearing each other to pieces. At the head of the principal table was erected a grand chair of state, designed for Juno. Immediately behind it rose a pillar surmounted by a magnificent stuffed peacock, and on each side of it stood motionless, like perfect images, the two little pages already mentioned. According to previous instructions, when supper was served, but before it was announced, they had hastened to place themselves there; solely intent on performing their duty correctly, they little knew or heeded how doubly mournful looked the blank in the middle when all its environments were completed with so much success. The

coup d'œil presented by this table was resplendent: gilt and silver dishes spread with sumptuous viands; vases, urns, cups, épergnes, candelabra, all of the same material or of the most glittering cut glass, shone like sheet lightning from top to bottom of the board. Lord Olford cast his eyes adown the glory, and wondered what possessions Fortune might have in store for him. He was a poor lord, but he was not mercenary; he had too much refinement for that; he liked Miss Neville very much, and saw no reason why he should not be happy with her; certainly, if she had only a few thousands he would not have thought of her, but as things were, it would surely be no drawback to be blessed with abundance, and his delicacy in no way reproached him for his anxiety to win the heiress. The other tables, though less sumptuous than this at which the queen herself had intended to preside, outshone anything that had been seen in the neighbourhood for many years.

Mr Parker, after some graceful hesitation, permitted himself to be placed in Juno's chair of state, where he certainly looked very small; however, he did his best to promote mirth and enjoyment, and the company were willing to appear delighted, but still there was a weight and a gloom on many; Mercury's wings drooped, and his hand with the caduceus hung heavily by his side; Mr Routledge looked sorrowfully at his queen's throne, which he considered worse than empty; Major Smyth sat opposite to the *one* magpie without venturing on a second joke; Lord Olford spoke scarcely a word; Lord Lillywhyte sulkily marvelled at "country customs," where the hostess and the beauty of the night vanished before supper; and finally, when the multitudes took their departure, it was with a feeling that all was not right.

The next morning witnessed perhaps the most dispiriting sight in the fashionable world: the débris of a mighty feast laid bare to the light of the risen sun—that sun whose level beams moreover, penetrating through the lower door of the grapery, still half open, fell softly on the severed cestus, as it lay untouched where it had dropped; and sought entrance through the jealously-closed windows of the chamber where the heiress lay in a burning typhus fever.

At seven o'clock on that melancholy morning, Dr Campbell, having just fallen into a troubled sleep, was roused by Rachel, who entered his room in a hurried manner and handed him a note. It was from Mrs Neville, requesting his immediate attend-

ance at Sunville, as her eldest daughter was seriously ill. What was to be done? To go was impossible. Mrs Neville of course knew nothing of what had passed the night before, and had very properly summoned him without consulting the patient herself. He called for his writing-desk, took out of it a card on which was the address of a Dr. Strong, who resided in a village about two miles on the other side of Sunville, and then scribbled a few lines to Mrs Neville, saying he had been taken so ill that he could not leave his bed, but assuring her she might place full confidence in the gentleman whose card he sent, as he was well known to him. With this answer the messenger was ordered to return to Sunville at full speed. He then lay down to consider what was next to be done. He was very unhappy about Miss Neville; she had probably got a serious cold that might end in an inflammation, for she was much heated when the water was dashed on her, and, when he made his exit, had something else to occupy her besides the thought of drying and making herself comfortable. If she died it would be partly his fault, but—it could not be helped; it was only one of the usual features in his fate; whether he was to blame or not, he was to cause the ruin of every woman who came within his circle. In his new trouble the first thought which suggested itself was, that if Miss Neville became dangerously ill, as she probably might, Strong would not like to have the sole charge of her, and would of course call him in; he could not pretend to be indisposed for more than a day or two, and then what was to be done? His plan was soon formed, and as there was no sacrifice to be made he could act with promptness and energy. He rang, and desired his breakfast to be brought to him at nine, and directed that when Mr Bolton came he should be sent up-stairs. He tried to sleep a little, but could not: and at the appointed time Rachel served him with coffee and toast, having first bathed his face and hands with eau-de-Cologne, in spite of “nonsense!” and “extravagant creature!”—phrases of which she pretty well understood the meaning. He had some time done his meal when Edmund arrived.

This poor fellow was in excellent spirits, far more light-hearted than any individual of the multitude that had spent the night in feverish excitement, and was now in the miserable collapse.

“Ho, ho, sir! I took care to be half an hour late, on purpose

to allow for last night's dissipation, and I find you still in bed. I am happy to see you a regular man of fashion ! ”

“ Let me alone, my dear boy ; I came home with the Davenports before half the fun was over. I went to bed early enough, but I am poorly ; was not very well when I went there, and my head was perfectly upset with music and sights. You know I find these things a bore. Sit down, I want to talk to you.”

Edmund obeyed, expecting a most vivid description of the scenes that had bewildered his master and made him ill ; though, in the judgment of the pupil, he never looked better nor handsomer, with the white sheets floating about him, his hair not yet out of curl, his face refreshed by Rachel's ablutions, and a slight languor in his eyes, which gave them an expression almost voluptuous.

He resumed : “ You are aware that I take an excursion from home every year about the end of the summer ; well, I had settled to go in about ten days, but I got a letter this morning which obliges me to depart immediately ”—(perfectly true)—“ so I am to be off this evening, and you must attend to the dispensary during my absence ; and as to your father, he is pretty much as usual again, and you have some idea of the mode of managing him. How are they at Northwood Abbey ? ”

“ Lady Caroline is ill ; my sister Sarah is with her.”

“ And they have not sent for me ! ”

“ No, indeed,” said Edmund ; “ I am much surprised at it ; but I suppose they think they have only to make her return to your former prescriptions.”

He spoke hesitatingly, for he knew from Sarah that a London physician had been sent for, and that there was some mystery in the case.

“ Well,” said Campbell, “ I am very glad they can dispense with me, for go I must ! ”

He then gave Edmund some further professional directions, and ended with, “ Now, I suppose, you expect in return for all the hard work I have laid on you, that I will give you a full account of this splendid *fête* that I have been at, but I have a great deal to do in a short space of time, and I cannot attempt it. However, my horse that I keep at livery at Drewitt's is at your service, and you may ride to see the Routledges to-morrow or next day, and the girls will give you a far more interesting description of the entertainment than I could. They enjoyed themselves

greatly, and were much admired. I will write to you during my absence. Now, my son, go to the dispensary and look in there, and be a very steady fellow while I am away. Remember me to your sisters. *Vive vaeque !* ”

He stretched out his hand to him, with his own smile on his lip. Edmund pressed it, and even stooped down and kissed him ; he could not resist the wish, he was so kind, and gentle, and winning.

“ I will do everything I possibly can, sir, to perform my duty according to my imperfect abilities.”

He then went away.

Campbell, as soon as he was left alone, rose, dressed himself, and began to make active preparations for his departure. Packing and writing letters engaged him all the morning ; among others, he epistolized Dr Strong, informing him that he was called off suddenly, but that he was not to mention this at Sunville, and that he was to be sure to write to him every second day while Miss Neville remained ill, with an account of her health. Late in the afternoon he hastened to the Vicarage to take leave of the Davenports, both of whom he found in the drawing-room. Mr Davenport was as communicative as usual.

“ I have been to Sunville to-day, to leave our cards and to make inquiries, and really I suspect Miss Neville is very ill. The answer we all got (for there were crowds of people leaving cards and inquiring) was that she had a very heavy cold ; but the servants all look frightened, and are walking about on tiptoe, and they are not attempting to take down any of the decorations for fear of making the slightest noise ; and I was in the hall, and everything looks so wretched ; the lamps out, the garlands and ornaments hanging half off and half on, and the censer in the middle with some ashes on it. I thought I should never get away, and I believe Parker thinks the same ; I just saw him for a few seconds ; he looks ghastly ; he says they are packing up, and will go to-morrow ; they are of no use there, and Mrs Parker will get a fit of nerves if she remains. But did they send for you ? ”

Campbell evaded the question. “ In case she might require a physician, I sent a message out there to-day recommending Strong. I set off on my annual excursion to-night.”

Great surprise, of course, was evinced by them both on hearing of his sudden resolve ; but he settled everything by giving

them the same reason he had given Edmund, and he was not a man to be cross-examined by any one.

Whenever he went from home he was always charged to write twice a-week to the Vicarage.

"You will write turn-about to Mrs Davenport and me?" cried Davenport.

"I will not; whenever I do so you leave her to answer my letters to you, and I will at least show her the courtesy of addressing to her what she is to have the trouble of replying to."

Davenport only laughed; and a cordial farewell then took place. Poor Milly could scarcely restrain her tears; she suspected there was more concealed under his impromptu determination than he was willing to avow; there were some questions she could have asked him if her husband had not been present, but the latter gave her no opportunity; and, as Campbell seemed composed, she hoped that all was right. So after repeated adieus, charges, promises, and wringings of the hand, Campbell parted from her, and hurried back to his cottage, and that night left Northwood for the nearest railway station, accompanied by his dog. We are not to attend him on his tour; we hope it was prosperous, we are sure it was interesting; our present business lies at Northwood Abbey.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SECRET EXPLODES, AND THE TRAP IS PREPARED.

"Par la science que le ciel m'a donnée j'ai reconnu que c'étoit de l'esprit qu'elle étoit malade, et que tout son mal ne venoit que d'une imagination déréglée, d'un désir dépravé de vouloir être mariée."—
MOLIÈRE.

THE physician who had been written to by Lord Northwood to come from town to see Lady Caroline did not arrive exactly at the time he was expected. An accident had occurred in a high quarter, and his attendance was indispensable. The Earl became wretched. The excitement produced in his daughter by the arrival of Miss Bolton, and by her intelligence that the report re-

specting Dr Campbell's intended marriage was false, had subsided, and she became as ill as ever. As she made no further objection to seeing Campbell, her father had nearly resolved to send for him on the very day of Miss Neville's ball; then it struck him that this step would be injudicious; that one doctor might commence a system that the other might reverse, and, moreover, that Dr H—— would be hurt at this precipitancy, and would not enter on his duty with zeal and kind feeling. While he was racked with doubt and uneasiness, Dr H—— made his appearance at the Abbey, late on the very same evening that Dr Campbell had so suddenly departed from Northwood. Lady Caroline had retired to her bed, more feverish than usual; accordingly Dr H—— pronounced it a highly unfitting time to examine her case, adding, that when visiting her he should be accompanied by the physician who had lately attended her in the country, and with whom, moreover, it was necessary he should consult respecting his previous treatment, and the effect it had on the patient. Accordingly, the Earl wrote a note to Dr Campbell, stating the circumstances, and requesting that he would come to the Abbey without a moment's delay. A messenger was despatched with this summons at a very early hour in the morning, and before the family had come down-stairs he was back again with the announcement that Dr Campbell had left the country, and his servant had no idea when he would return.

This news produced a little confusion at first, but Dr H—— had no time to lose.

"Well, my Lord," said he, "since I cannot be joined by your present medical adviser, I will do what I can alone," and he hastened to Lady Caroline's apartment.

In about eight minutes he came back looking a little flurried.

"What! all over already,—is there no hope?" cried the father spasmodically.

"Nothing over yet, nor commenced either," said the doctor. "I don't know what to make of her; she is not as I remember her. I just mentioned to her, in apology for not being accompanied by your Northwood doctor, that he had left the country, and you were not sure whether he would ever return,—was not that what you told me?"

"Not exactly," replied the Earl; "in fact, I am confident he *will* come back again; I only said his housekeeper did not know when to expect him."

"Then I made a slight mistake," said the doctor; "and indeed I regret it very much, considering the effect produced. She fell into most dreadful fits of crying, got hysterical in fact, and I ran to assist her; but the young lady, her companion, told me it would be better if I would leave her entirely to her, and that she would get over it sooner,—that she is dreadfully nervous; so I am come back until she is composed and fit to be examined."

He sat down with an air of impatient resignation.

"Ve-ery extraordinary! ve-ery extraordinary indeed!" stammered the Earl; "she is undoubtedly in a frightfully nervous state; she was terrified at seeing you without the person she is latterly so accustomed to."

"She has not been long forgetting me; she was not so afraid of me in town; I'm not very formidable,—a quiet, middle-aged, married man; of the two she knows me by far the longest," rejoined the doctor.

"I declare you have no idea—no idea," cried the Earl, and then stopped short, having by a little flash of sense discovered that he was likely to make matters worse by any further attempt at explanation. They were silent for a minute or two; then the doctor took out his watch:—

"I must be at the Lowtown station by two o'clock, or I shall miss the train to London, and disappoint the Duke of——, whom I promised to see at ten to-night."

The Earl fidgeted uneasily.

"Come, I will go myself and speak to her;"—but at the same moment Sarah entered the room with a very embarrassed air.

"Ha! Miss Bolton, you always bring good news," he exclaimed.

"My Lord," said she, rather awkwardly, "Lady Caroline cannot think Dr Campbell has left the country permanently without apprizing this family of his design, and she wishes to know exactly what message you got, for she is willing to wait for his return, should it take place in a few weeks, and not be examined until both the gentlemen can see her together, according to rule."

"He'll be back soon, to be sure," cried the Earl, "his house-keeper said so, but Dr H—— did not quite catch my words; however, pray tell her that as to waiting—it's all nonsense. Dr H—— is not to have the trouble of coming down here again in a month; and, besides, she requires immediate advice. Tell her there is not a moment to be lost,—he has a pressing engagement in town."

Sarah withdrew, having succeeded in her object, which was to get what she knew must be a mistake cleared up. If this had not been done, she trembled at the state into which the unfortunate Caroline might fall; she seemed likely to pass from hysterics into convulsions, and from thence into a situation more fearful still. Caroline on getting the Earl's message became composed, but she had fully betrayed herself; her father could no longer doubt of the truth. Dr H—— was at length invited up-stairs, and the Earl remained in the breakfast-room, wrapt in thought. After some time the doctor reappeared.

"Well, my Lord, I have made a strict examination of our patient; she is threatened with a serious disease,—but still only threatened; we *may* baffle it,—I should say we *shall* do so; but there is one indispensable proviso. Her mind must be set at rest; at present there is something very serious preying on it, and this if possible is to be removed; if it cannot she will fall a victim to the disease now incipient. My medicines and the course of life which I shall enjoin will surely have some retarding power; but if the retarding power have only half the force of the accelerating evil, I need not tell you which will be the victor in the end."

The Earl fiddled with his watch-chain, rubbed his feet on the carpet, and then swung his chair back on its hind legs.

"Ha! yes, yes,—I see; it is a relief that there is no settled disease; but you say it will gain head if the mind is not made tranquil:—not such an easy matter that, either;—one cannot always discover what these women are brooding over;—but if it can be discovered, you say positively that her life depends on its removal?"

"Decidedly; and your Lordship will no doubt be able to detect the cause of her present very serious uneasiness; it is your affair of course to decide whether it is of such a character as that you would gladly remove it rather than—"

The Earl finished the sentence for him:

"Rather than let her die! Well, I should think I ought!"

"These are delicate points, my Lord, on which it is not our business to venture an opinion. If there is nothing morally wrong nor socially degrading in whatever she has set her heart on, you would naturally yield to save her life."

Here Lord Fitzarthur came in to breakfast, and after he had received assurances from Dr H—— that his sister was likely to be ultimately restored to health, they all sat down, and conversed

on indifferent subjects during the repast. When it was over Lord Northwood took Dr H—— into his study, and the latter wrote some prescriptions, and gave a number of directions about diet, exercise, and other matters. He finished by saying that when Dr Campbell came back he must visit her occasionally and report her progress to him.

"We'll see about that ;—oh, yes,—we'll settle about that,—" answered the Earl, a little confused. "Meantime I will write to you myself,—eh ?"

"I shall be happy to hear from you, but a professional man's report would be quite necessary. Now, mark my words, my Lord :—I take a deep interest in your family, quite independent of my simple duty ;—I have the honour of counting you among my truest friends ;"—

"Ay, ay," interrupted the Earl ; "our friendship is a case of twenty-five years' standing ; you have piloted me through some breakers ; if you could only carry me through the present quicksands—"

"All I can do is to say these few words," continued Dr H——. "There is a very close sympathy between Lady Caroline's mind and body ; it is common in persons who have been over-indulged, and are wholly unused to exercise a regulating and controlling will over their propensities and wishes. Now the former must be cured before we can expect to set the latter right. There are two ways of applying a remedy to your daughter's mental ailment ;—you may either induce her to make a sacrifice of some object that it is not meet for her to have, and she may return to peace with the noble consolation that she has done her duty ;—whether this would be a likely result in a debilitated, spoiled child like her, I do not dare to say ;—but if it be not practicable, you must succumb to her. Pardon me, my Lord, when I say that this want of self-control is partly the consequence of wrong training, and the poor victim herself is not the individual to be blamed most ;—if you yield to her you are perhaps only repaying her a debt you owe her for having failed in firmness at a period when it was in your power to mould her to your will. You will probably be obliged to succumb now, or—lose her."

These words sank deep into the Earl's heart.

"I understand you perfectly," he answered. "I will investigate the case, and do all I can to save her life."

Cordial adieus then passed between them, and Dr H—— returned in all haste to town.

The Earl sat alone musing. "Not too late yet! . . . I feared a disease had set in. . . It is evident he suspects she is labouring under some unfortunate attachment, . . . and indeed there is no doubt of it now on my part, after what has happened. I always encouraged H—— to speak the truth to me, and he has given me some hard knocks to-day. I am to blame myself (he intimates clearly) that she has set her heart on some man, and will not give him up except with her life. I am in duty bound to let her have her own way now, because her determination to have it or die has been generated by my bad training. These are bitter things. . . I have spoiled her first, and have no right to kill her afterwards. . . There are difficulties in the way, but at any rate I have no reason to doubt who the man is. . . I must see Miss Bolton directly." He returned to the breakfast-room, rang, and desired Miss Bolton to be sent to him, if it was her convenience. In a short time she made her appearance.

"Well, my friend, how fares it with our patient now?"

"She is more comfortable at present," answered Sarah; "she was greatly agitated by Dr H——'s examination and questions."

"I am not surprised at that;—but before he examined her at all,—that outbreak when he blunderingly said he thought Campbell was to come back no more (H—— is decidedly grown a little deaf,)—what are we to say to this? was it not a sad thing?"

"Of course, my Lord, she got a great start; you know she thinks Dr Campbell the most desirable medical man that ever attended her; he gives so little medicine, and is kind and agreeable."

"Ah, my dear young friend!" cried the Earl with a faint smile, "this will not do. Think you nothing more lay hid under that passionate burst of tears?"

Sarah blushed. "Indeed, my Lord, her tears raised no suspicions in me."

"Then they raised my previous suspicions to certainty. Besides, Dr H—— told me she had some grievous weight on her mind; that it must be removed; what do you think that it is?"

Sarah answered:—"She acknowledged to the doctor that

her mind was not at rest, but neither he nor I inquired the source of her disquietude. Would you like to go up to her, my Lord? She is inclined to be refractory, and must be spoken to; she says she will not take Dr H——'s medicines nor use his liniments; that she is too weak for some things, and too nervous for others; and as to what is on her mind,—perhaps if you ask her she will tell you."

"I know it, Miss Bolton, I know it. She likes Dr Campbell." He looked full at Sarah.

"Perhaps she does," answered Sarah.

"And Campbell, of course, is equally attached to her," rejoined his Lordship.

"He has not spoken to her, I believe," said Sarah.

"Why, he would not dare; I think him honourable, and as under ordinary circumstances he could not hope for my consent, just what I would expect is that he'd abstain from talking to her of love or marriage; but they are attached, as you say; it is a bad business."

Sarah had said no such thing as that Dr Campbell was attached to Caroline, but the Earl seemed determined to take it for granted. To suppose that his daughter loved a man who did not care for her, and a man so much beneath her too, would have seemed as ludicrous to him as to imagine that she was going to change places with the housemaid. He continued:

"I should not have allowed him to attend her at all, but what could I do? it was a most distressing case;—and then it was so unlike her to take a sudden fancy; she was hard enough to please on other occasions. And yet I do not suppose he used any particular arts to entrap her; what do you say, Miss Bolton?"

Sarah, who was convinced he did not care for her, could not say less than that she was confident Dr Campbell had not used any undue arts to engage Lady Caroline's affections.

Here Lord Fitzarthur entered the room. "I have been visiting Caroline," said he gloomily; she seems determined not to do anything Dr H—— has ordered; she is altogether in a most terrible state of mind and body, and if some blessed change does not come over her soon, of which I see no chance, I apprehend we shall lose her in a few weeks."

"That is the real fact, Freddy," answered his father; "some-

thing must be done to effect a change, and that promptly." He then hastily left the apartment.

"Pray, Miss Bolton," said Lord Fitzarthur, "did you happen to hear Dr H—— say whether my sister would require the attendance of a medical man here to watch the progress of her health, and write to him—and such things?"

"Yes, he said that was indispensable," answered Sarah.

"Then we quit this country for the present;—there is no alternative; I will have her off before many days are over." He then went out as abruptly as his father had done, and equally determined to put his project into execution.

Sarah left alone was glad to rest herself and breathe in peace for a few minutes. Her first thought was heartily to wish herself at home. She was getting amazingly uncomfortable among these people. She was appointed interpreter between the father and daughter, and expected to please both. In fact she was turned into a kind of 'Doddridge's Family Expositor,' with the office of giving an ample and diffuse paraphrase of Caroline's hysterics to the Earl, and was moreover required to supply notes and criticisms of her own on their meanings: by Caroline she was expected to reconcile the texts of Dr H—— and Lord Northwood, and even to reject as spurious whatever did not accord with that young lady's preconceived notions and favourite mode of interpretation. As to Lord Fitzarthur,—he now seemed to look on her as a mere machine for answering questions; he had not said a word to her yesterday on any subject but that of Caroline, and this morning,—the few words he uttered have been just put on record. He threatened to take his sister out of the country,—she wished he would, it would be as good a way as possible of cutting the knot; better far than to keep her near a man she was infatuated with, and who would not for a thousand reasons propose for her as long as he lived. But do what they might, she herself must very soon go home: if she neglected her father and he got ill in Dr Campbell's absence, what was to be done? She must leave her friends at the Abbey to perform their "*L'Amour médecin*," or "*L'Amant malgré lui*"—or whatever other name they might be pleased to call their comedy,—without her co-operation; she was not accustomed to take a part in such dramas. She enjoyed half-an-hour's quietness, after which she was summoned to business again by the return of Lord North-

wood. His face bore traces of tears, but he was now composed.

"Miss Boltou, she has confessed all! I entreated of her to place confidence in me, and assured her that I was ready to make concessions if there was nothing sinful or base in the affair. So my poor child confessed the attachment;—his behaviour has been most honourable as well as I can make out,—you know these are sacred subjects with young maidens,—we cannot harrow their most tender feelings with rough questions,—but it does not appear that Campbell has entangled her in the slightest engagement."

"Then, my Lord, it is not too late yet for her to give him up, if you and her brother would speak calmly, and remonstrate with her," interrupted Sarah, making a last effort.

"Give him up! Oh, there is not the least hope of that. And H—— has said some things to me that have frightened me to death; I am in a horrible dilemma; every moment of agony and doubt that she suffers gives a tremendous shake to her sands of life. In fact every pause I make hurries on the crisis at which concession may come too late. It is a sad blow to me—such an alliance—but her loss would be a heavier one still;—yes,—it must be;—either death or Campbell."

"He has given up calling at the Abbey," observed Sarah; "what can be the meaning of that?"

The Earl answered, "She told me she attributed it at first to some cause that did not exist; then, on reflection, she thinks he is hurt by Fitzarthur's conduct to him on the night when poor Campbell exposed his life to save her from that half-mad Indian; she described the scene to me as well as she could recollect it, and it appears that my son behaved most shamefully to the person to whom she was indebted for her preservation. Fitzarthur's pride will kill us all, as I often told him; but that is no matter, provided it can be engraved on our tombs that the blood of the Fitzarthurs and the Plantagenets flowed on in a pure current, unmixed with any fluid from baser veins. Fine comfort! I did not look for high birth when I was marrying, and I was very happy. Now, this man is a perfect gentleman, accomplished, agreeable, refined in all his tastes and pursuits,—but then his profession—ay, ay,—that is the great rub;—it is not a noble one,—no, no! But if I give my consent—and I apprehend from what Dr H—— has said, that I certainly must—why, then he

throws up his profession as a matter of course, and I will make him independent,—to a certain degree,—but his having nothing himself is a serious matter of uneasiness;—while I live they need never leave this house,—but afterwards—what a change she will experience !”

He paused. Sarah gave him full credit for being ready to act according to the dictates of simple natural affection and tenderness, but she marvelled how Dr Campbell, a man who always seemed determined to dispose of his heart as he pleased, and had as strong a will as any one, was to be drawn within the circle marked out by a doting parent. The Earl ran on thinking aloud now rather than addressing Sarah particularly.

“Poor Campbell ! what will he ever say or think ? An astounding rise for him ! And yet I would venture to predict that he will bear it like a philosopher :—it is curious,—but it has flitted across me at times that this man deserved to be one of us. How singularly things come about !”

After a little time Lord Northwood said to Sarah,—

“Now, Miss Bolton, my daughter has promised that if I will not place myself in open hostility to her inclinations, she will assiduously follow all the course prescribed by Dr H——: he says it is imperative on her to exert herself, and to take exercise ; suppose you order the carriage, and drive with her to see your dear father ; and, if your brother is at home, just ask him when Campbell will be back ; his pupil is very likely to know ; in a month I should hope :—you’ll find out.”

Sarah, on returning to Lady Caroline’s room, found her dressed, and in a state of great excitement.

“Oh Sarah ! papa knows everything. My miserable weakness, when Dr H—— said he did not know whether *he* would ever return again, betrayed me. But if Dr H—— has guessed nothing, I do not regret that it is all over ; for dear papa is so kind ! he almost said he would not object,—just think of that, dear Sarah !”

“But, Caroline, Dr Campbell himself has not yet opened his lips on the subject,” suggested Sarah.

“No, no ! he has not ; for papa says,—ah ! how can I tell you what he says, it seems so depreciatory of a man whom I think far superior to every one I ever saw in any rank of life !”

“But you are not responsible for what Lord Northwood said ; I should be glad if you would tell me.”

"Why, he said that Dr Campbell naturally would not mention his attachment to me, when he could not dare to hope for success with such a difference in rank, fortune, and all such things that I don't care a pin about. But he says he knows an alliance with us would make Dr Campbell the happiest man on earth, and papa is much sharper at seeing and judging of things than I am ;—indeed, he seems convinced of what *his* wishes are,—and he praised him so for his modesty and honourable feelings, and his determination not to advance a step without proper encouragement,—and papa seems quite inclined to give him that encouragement for the sake of the happiness of us both : dear, kind papa ! forgetting all his prejudices about birth and station for my sake !"

"Caroline," said Sarah, seriously, "this is the most important crisis in your life. It is not long since you thought Dr Campbell was going to be married to Miss Neville : do you now feel that you have good grounds for supposing him attached to yourself ?"

Caroline answered pettishly :—

"You know that suspicion about Miss Neville was all a mistake ; of course he could not like us both, but 'tis certain he never liked her ; is not that all settled ?"

"Yes : but if he had given you any proofs that his heart was yours, would you have been so ready to believe the report as you were ?"

"Did not I tell you," cried Caroline, much excited, "that he was afraid to 'give proofs,' knowing the pride of the family ? he was as attentive to me as he dared to be ;—papa understands it all and you cannot ;—it is a shame to turn my poor breast inside out ;—you never were so ill-natured before ! and to choose this time when I am so ill,—and so agitated !"

She ended by falling into violent hysterics. Sarah was much vexed : this was the second attack of this nature to-day, and the constant recurrence of such fits was very exhausting. She resolved that no further interference on her part should take place : it had become a case in which the most delicate suggestions from the most devoted friend were likely to have no effect but that of dissolving the friendship for ever.

When Lady Caroline had recovered herself, Sarah apologized for having distressed her so much, saying that she was anxious, before her departure, to ascertain that her friend's hopes of happiness were based on a solid foundation.

Caroline caught at the new trouble : "What ! you are not

going home so soon ! I cannot do without you ; you must be with me all the time that *he* is away."

"That is quite impossible," answered Sarah ; "while '*he* is away' my father requires to be most carefully watched ; I should not like him to get ill when I had no physician to send for."

Caroline did not relish being told there was any one in the world who could want Dr Campbell but herself ; she pouted a little, but soon cleared her brow, and said,—

"Ah, yes, we shall all be happy and comfortable when *he* returns."

She then agreed to Sarah's proposal, that they should go out to drive, and call at Laburnum Lodge, to see Mr Bolton and make inquiries from Edmund respecting another intensely interesting object.

The Earl in the mean time, having searched for his son about the house, found him sitting in his dressing-room, in a very low state of spirits.

"Ho ! Fitzarthur ! pretty work this is ! I don't know whether you are aware that you will probably be the death of your sister !"

"The death of my sister, sir ! I should be glad to learn how."

The father was quick with his answer. "She has not a physician to come near her ! not a creature to watch the effects of H——'s prescriptions and write him periodical reports of her progress, and H—— assured me this was quite necessary ; truly, I should be very much obliged to any one who could inform me where I can get the required person, now that you have turned Dr Campbell out."

"I never turned Dr Campbell out," answered Fitzarthur coldly.

"Something very like it—something very like it indeed. You did not treat him with common civility the night he saved your sister's life. You wounded his feelings deeply, and he has given up coming to the house. He has refused to dine here once or twice since then."

"I am not aware that he saved Caroline's life," said Fitzarthur, in the same tone.

The Earl became irritated.

"I don't understand your manner—I really don't : when she is in the most imminent danger you seem perfectly indifferent ; and when the only man I can get to attend her has been affronted by you (as she is convinced he was on the night the Indian, or whatever he is, made that desperate attack on her), and when she

may die for want of the necessary attention of which you have robbed her, I should expect a little contrition—a certain amount of uneasiness. Yes, my conviction is that she would not be half so bad now if she had had proper attention for the last three weeks ; and—if *he* is hopelessly offended—why her certain death will be the result !”

He stopped to observe the effect of these words. He flattered himself that he had sufficiently scared and humbled his son, and brought him into a frame of mind in which he might with some degree of patience listen to the further astounding intelligence about to be communicated to him. This intelligence the Earl never would have had the courage to announce if he had not first stunned Fitzarthur with the apprehension that his sister's death, were it to occur, might be possibly traceable to him. Certainly, if convinced that he had, unintentionally indeed, plunged the arrow in her side, Lord Fitzarthur ought scarcely to object to the best means of extracting it. He answered his father quietly, and more in his usual manner.

“ I do not deny, sir, that my sister requires skilful superintendence at the present time. What I do deny is, that Dr Campbell is the only member of the faculty, and that Northwood Abbey is the only residence to be found in the world. Now, as I do not think it advisable that Dr Campbell should be about her any more, I hope and request that you will not resist my proposal of taking her out of this country immediately, to some place where she will have change of air, and a physician to whom no objections attach.”

The Earl was thunderstruck.

“ Are you mad, Freddy ? ”

“ Not at all, sir ; neither can I believe that you are as blind as you appear to be : it is impossible but that you see how that man has infatuated her ! I certainly have discouraged him from coming to this house, and now that you find her inclined to give him up you would recall him again, and plunge us once more into all our past perplexities ! ”

“ ‘ Inclined to give him up ! ’ ” repeated Lord Northwood, in a tone of irony and scorn. “ Her objection to let me send for him was entirely grounded on her dread of you—I have good reason to think. What could she suppose but that you would have—made short work of him if you had met him on the steps ? She is so far ‘ inclined to give him up,’ that if I oppose myself to the

attachment that exist between them her life is not worth a month's purchase."

Lord Fitzarthur turned very pale. The father went on without observing him :—

"But you would be for letting her die, of course."

His son did not notice these last words.

"Good heavens! I had some strange presentiment . . . my only sister! she whom I loved so much! . . . she and I—the last scions of our long line! . . . I was not—no, in spite of my forebodings, I was not prepared for this ending!"

Then the Lady Adela and the monk Anthony flashed across his mind, and he gave a shudder, pressing his hand to his forehead.

His father went on :—"These exclamations will come in with more fitness a month hence, when you are bending over her coffin; I see no relation they have to her present situation. When you have killed her there will be some sense in them."

"I am not going to kill her, sir, nor to meddle in any plans that you have formed in conjunction with Dr H—— for her future happiness. I have a secret conviction that any effort on my part would be unavailing, and would only degrade myself. You would probably have no objection to my going abroad for a while; my presence here would only be a restraint upon the *young people*, and would be far from promoting my own enjoyment. I hope that on my return home I shall find Lady Caroline Campbell a strong, healthy woman."

"I was prepared for all this," said the Earl, endeavouring to choke his vexation—"fully prepared for it. Of course if you choose to go abroad I would be sorry to prevent you; you are past two-and-twenty, and I do not mean to interfere any more with your movements. Respecting those two names that you have linked together in that invidious tone and manner, if you designed to inflict pain, you have failed: to me there is nothing incongruous in their connection. Campbell is a noble name, belonging to a family as great if not greater than ours, and I have heard that this man comes from a branch of the house of Argyle, but I do not care about that; whatever his extraction may be, he is a gentleman in every respect, and an ornament to any society into which he may be introduced. On the other hand, I am not blind to his very great disadvantages."

The Earl pronounced these last words in a stronger tone and

a more self-satisfied manner, with a hope that a liberal acknowledgment of deficiencies and a searching examination of the dark side of the case would fully conciliate his son.

"There are drawbacks that can't be done away with." He spoke with still greater emphasis, as if the recognition of drawbacks that were not to be acted upon was not more mortifying to a dissenting party than if he totally ignored them.

"His profession," continued his Lordship, "is the most objectionable one he can have. It is in itself associated with many mean, degrading occupations, and is, moreover, incapable of progress. Now, if Campbell were an officer in the army I could go on purchasing for him till I got him a regiment; if a clergyman, a deanery would be nothing with my interest; and, as a barrister, with his talents I could get him on rapidly; but here—no progress—no progress!" He shook his head, fully alive to the bearings of the case.

Fitzarthur made no observations on this tantalizing picture of what his brother-in-law might have been, contrasted with the quagmire in which he was inextricably glued. He continued to direct against the wall a hard, frosty, unsympathizing glance from under his low eyebrows; he took no further notice of his father.

The Earl fidgeted.

"But there are compensations for everything;—I know *I* feel it;—*I* am not thankless."

Lord Fitzarthur thought himself a religious young man, as young men go; still he could not see any direct cause for immediately kneeling down beside his parent and thanking Heaven for having vouchsafed them a dispensary doctor for a son and brother-in-law. In his theology it was a matter for resignation, and even that he was not yet fully prepared to exercise.

"Don't you perceive, now," continued Lord Northwood, "that, since he *is* a doctor, she will have a kind, skilful guardian watching over her day and night, ready to meet every ailment on the threshold, and nip it in the bud?"

The Earl's eyes twinkled as he bounded gracefully from one metaphor to another. His son's patience was exhausted: he took up the straw hat that he wore when walking about the fields, and as he went out he said:—

"I agree with you, sir, in the conclusion you seem to have

come to—that infallibility is a higher possession than the capability of progress.”

He then left his father alone in the dressing-room.

The Earl gave a deep sigh, as if relieved.

“This was the hardest task I had to perform. He has not been so bad, at least not quite so bad as I expected. But he is very dark ; if he had made a greater row I could have managed him better. I should not care if he did go away until it was all over ; if he remained he might be ungracious or even rude to Campbell, and upset everything. If I take them to live with me (as of course I must,—how could they live in any comfort on her fortune?) I suppose I shall have little more of his company. Well, it can’t be helped ; I may not sacrifice the life of one child to the pride and dignity of another. Besides, he will not continue as hard and haughty as he is now ; he loves her tenderly, and that may set everything right. Yes ; human nature—the ties of blood—will act more strongly than either persuasions or authority on my part. I will leave everything to time, that reconciles us to, and makes us familiar with, what appears at first sight monstrous and insupportable. Let him go off as soon as he chooses ; I will place as much money as he may desire at his disposal.”

He wiped away a tear, and went down to his study to attend to some business hitherto neglected on this day of domestic agitation.

Lady Caroline appeared at dinner, after having for some days before absented herself from this meal. Her brother expressed no pleasure at seeing her return, scarcely looked towards the side of the table where she sat, and addressed his conversation entirely to Miss Bolton. The Earl made various observations, appealing from the brother to the sister and from the sister to the brother, to seek confirmation of what he said, thus striving to form a link of himself which might unite the two ; but it was all in vain. Lord Fitzarthur, when he chose, presented a surface of ice that a troop of dragoons might have exercised on with safety. Caroline could not fail to perceive the serious change that had taken place in him. She must have felt, if passion did not blind her, that in gaining the great object for which she was panting she was scarcely making an acquisition, but rather effecting an exchange ;—an exchange of one tried and valued, devoted to her from earliest

infancy, bound to her by one blood, one line of bright retrospections, one interest, one doting parent,—for another of whose affection and desire to obtain her she might form flattering conjectures, but knew absolutely nothing.

As every one felt uncomfortable, Lord Northwood was glad to go to his study after tea, and Caroline, equally anxious to make her escape, expressed her intention of retiring to her room to get the liniment applied which Dr H—— had ordered, and she invited Sarah to come up and talk to her during the operation. Her brother then said :—

“If you have not servants enough I will get you another, but if you think I will permit you to make a convenience of Miss Bolton you are quite in error; she has promised to play chess with me this evening.”

Caroline, who had never before been spoken to by him in this harsh manner, quitted the room in silence with tears in her eyes.

Sarah, weary of humouring Caroline’s variable moods, was very well pleased that Lord Fitzarthur had made this protest in her favour, though she guessed what he wanted to talk to her about. The chess-board was brought, and Sarah, having chosen the white men (a singular fact that ladies always do), during the mechanical process of advancing pawns Fitzarthur said, with a sarcastic smile :—

“I suppose, Miss Bolton, my father has told you of the other remedy besides lotions and draughts that is necessary to save my sister’s life ? ”

“Dr H—— said her mind was to be kept easy,” answered Sarah, a little drily.

“She has nothing here to disturb her mind,” pursued he ; “all her lawful wishes are anticipated and gratified before they are expressed.”

“Ah,” said Sarah, “that is the question at issue. Has any one individual insight enough to anticipate all the wishes of another ? But if he has, she ought to be happy, for I’m sure she has no wishes that are not lawful. Take care ; you are putting your knight in taking of my pawn.”

“Oh, I would give more than a knight to get any satisfaction on this distressing subject. Some things may be lawful that are not expedient ; now tell me, are not they concocting something very inexpedient among them at present ? ”

"Lady Caroline has confided some secrets to me that she has not given me liberty to divulge even to you."

"And my father has confided to me a secret that will not remain one long, I suppose. He told me he intends to permit my sister to marry Dr Campbell."

"Indeed," said Sarah, "he appears to me determined on that course."

"So we understand one another, Miss Bolton. Now, I think Campbell has acted in a most base manner. He has, I judge, taken advantage of the confidential, intimate position in which he was placed by the necessity of attending her, to engage the affections of that weak young creature, and entrap her into an engagement."

Sarah answered: "I think I can say with confidence that they are not engaged: as to his using undue arts to win her, I consider him incapable of that; I know him very well and am not partial to him."

"Not engaged! and has not he yet spoken to her?" cried Fitzarthur, regardless of the latter part of her speech.

Sarah felt more disinclined than ever to act her part as a "machine for answering questions" through the instrumentality of a game of chess. She would be sure to get into a scrape with either the Caroline or the anti-Caroline faction, and she thought it extremely hard that she should be placed in such an extremely delicate and embarrassing situation because of other people's weaknesses, which she utterly despised. She answered curtly:

"Lady Caroline says he has not spoken to her,—that he would not dare to do so without Lord Northwood's knowledge;—as to his attachment to her,—I presume she is satisfied that it exists; this is a point upon which I, at least, have no right to press her."

"Well," said Lord Fitzarthur, taking a more cheerful view of matters than he had previously done, and trying to smile her into better humour, at the same time putting a bishop in taking; "I believe ladies have a way of finding out that gentlemen are in love with them, independent of their putting it into so many words,—some think the lady finds out the state of her admirer's heart as soon as he does himself;—eh, Miss Bolton?"

"A few minutes before he does himself, I've heard," answered she, determined to show pluck, and disarm him at once.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed he. "I was behind, it seems, in my

estimate of their great insight. But you have not taken my bishop with your queen when you could."

"Queens are sometimes clement, and ladies make discoveries of which they do not always avail themselves afterwards," she answered.

"Heaven grant that such might be the case with my sister!" he exclaimed, as the gloom gathered again on his brow; "but by what my father says she appears determined to marry this country physician; the idea of it nearly kills me! but my poor father, humbugged and terrified by her and her changes, has settled that there is but one mode of rescuing her from the jaws of death."

"She has done so little to master herself, and is now so weak in body," said Sarah, "that I am almost convinced a denial would be fatal at this advanced stage of the affair. As soon as ever she thinks matters are taking an unfavourable turn she mismanages herself as much as she possibly can."

"I knew she had failings," rejoined he, "but I had no conception she would have been so headstrong as this. Ye gods! what cannot the indomitable will of a woman effect!"

Sarah was no Miss Cope, as I hardly need to say; she would not chime in with the opinions of the great if she did not fully think with them; nay, she did more than keep silence, she sometimes ventured to express a very opposite sentiment, though in doing so she was likely to give offence. She could not acquiesce in Lord Fitzarthur's last words, though he was young, unmarried, and an Earl's only son. She said:

"The indomitable will of a woman can do a great deal, my Lord; it can reverse dynasties, and—checkmate kings" (placing her queen in alarming proximity to Fitzarthur's king, which was so well protected by its pawns and tower that it had not a square to move to); "but you must excuse me for saying that the quality in your sister to which you apply that term is not worthy of it. An indomitable will conveys to me the idea of something strenuously active; an ever-advancing force that hews its way through all impediments, until the object in view is attained, whatever it may be; if it is a mean one even it is half-ennobled by the energies that have been evolved in the struggle to grasp it. Lady Caroline has not such a will as that,—she has no such force of character. In all her spasmodic endeavours to gain her point she has never entered into the field of

action ; her tactics are simply passive ; she might sit obstinately on a sofa and refuse food and deny herself sleep if the object of her wishes was not brought to her ; but off that sofa she would never stir to execute any project for arriving at her end."

Having delivered herself of this speech, she felt some compensation for being appointed confidante, "Doddridge's Family Expositor," and a "machine for answering questions."

Lord Fitzarthur, presented with this picture of his sister, drawn in strong and dark colours, and favoured with a checkmate at the same time, looked a little serious ; his low straight eyebrows seemed to fall still lower over his eyes, but the glance that escaped from beneath them was not an angry one ; he respected the woman who was not afraid to give him a true character of his sister, and to hint to himself that he was giving her qualities too favourable an appellation. Her independent mind seemed to him an equivalent for the highest rank ; he felt that if he were to marry such a person he could not make her more noble than nature had already made her. Compared with this oak-sapling of the forest his high-born sister appeared a poor nursling reared in a hot-house, and shivering at every breeze that entered through the half-opened windows, and yet not content with her glass-roofed, sun-illuminated asylum, peevishly and perversely requiring to be transplanted to the fields, and to make alliance with the thistle and the foxglove. He was checkmated too, and made look foolish ; she was a young lady who would scorn to accept of a proffered bishop, but would circumvent and ruin a king by her arts and genius.

"Well, I see you have beaten me, Miss Bolton ; indeed I am not fit to play chess this evening, my mind is in such a state ; but you can do two things at the same time with perfect ease : deliver a sound opinion, and inflict a checkmate simultaneously. I believe what you have said of my poor sister is true, but there are some who would thank you less for your sincerity than I do. I am afraid we can do nothing for her ; at the same time it is some comfort to me that you think he has not behaved in any dishonourable manner—"

He stopped short and sighed.

"I am sure he has not," said Sarah ; "I have seen them together occasionally, and he was always reserved, and never took the slightest advantage of—of her great affability to him."

A new thought rushed into his mind ;—Miss Bolton suspected

the advances were rather on her side,—perhaps even Campbell was indifferent to her;—the more he examined the case, the more frightful it grew.

“Yes, he is a very stiff man,—I always thought so. He never appeared to me as if he was in love with her, but I attributed his guarded manner to art; I saw plainly she was restless and unhappy when he was any little time without coming here, and I took for granted the attachment was mutual, and when I found them walking on the road together at night I considered they had met by appointment and that he was a villain. I could have stabbed him then and there.”

Sarah assured him their meeting was quite fortuitous, and that Campbell had behaved perfectly well throughout the whole transaction. It was curious how she was continually obliged to champion the man from whom she longed to rescue Caroline if she could; and yet common justice obliged her to say whatever she had said in his favour.

“You have relieved me on some points, Miss Bolton,” said Lord Fitzarthur; “he does not seem so much to blame; if they are to be married I hope he loves her; but if he does not he will not ask her and she may yet escape. I do not approve of him in any way; I should say he was gloomy, ill-tempered, and without any religion. And his profession!—a disgrace to her if he follows it, and if he gives it up,—what awaits her after my father’s death but poverty and meanness, compared to the life she has always led?”

A day or two after this conversation Sarah very gladly returned home; Caroline, put in spirits by her father’s promises, began to pay proper attention to her health; and Lord Fitzarthur, finding that Campbell was to be absent for a few weeks, postponed his intended departure; still drawn towards his only sister, whose wan looks excited his uneasiness and awakened his sympathy notwithstanding his deep displeasure at the step she seemed resolved to take.

CHAPTER XII.

CAPTURED!

"Voilà le digne neveu de mon oncle Perez pris comme un rat dans une ratière."—GIL BLAS.

"Mon Dieu! Est-ce que le prince est toujours comme cela?"

DIARY AND CORRESPONDENCE OF LORD MALMESBURY.

A MONTH has passed away since the incidents noted in our last chapter. The clear, crisp air,—the keen, invigorating breeze,—the dark foliage with its tinges of brown and yellow,—the short, crackling stubble over which the goose screams and strains her neck in search of her annual pickings,—the rich, well-thatched stacks of corn and hay, the substantial ornament and staple reliance of the thriving and cheerful homestead near which they stand,—the occasional snap of the sportsman's gun,—softened by the clear, sweet note of the robin,—all proclaim that the reign of autumn has fully set in.

And Miss Neville, too, is recovering—very slowly, but still she is quite out of danger. She is dressed every day and carried from her bed to the fireside, where she sits for some hours, very silent and calm. "The tempest of her soul," which

"in scorn had gazed

On that the feebler elements had raised,"

is now stilled. She looks much older than she did before her illness, and sadly wasted, but this is attributed entirely to the violence of the disease, and it is fully expected she will be perfectly herself again, after the lapse of some weeks. For her also had a physician been brought from London: when the fever approached its height Dr Strong would not undertake the care of her alone, and her mother was determined to have the very best assistance; so an eminent practitioner was summoned from the metropolis who watched over her for three days and two nights until the crisis was past and she was pronounced safe.

During all her illness Miss Cope was the person whom she perpetually required at her bedside. Neither her mother, her

sister, her waiting-maid, nor her nurse-tender could please her ; —to Miss Cope she raved night and day until that lady was nearly killed by vigils. But things improved when the London doctor arrived. He was a tall man of about forty-six ; with dark, powerful, hazel eyes, a Roman nose, very black hair, and a stern, determined expression of face. He took his stand by the bed and quelled her with a look. He then spoke :—

“ Let me not hear you utter a word, Miss Neville, while I am in the house.”

He applied ice to her head, which had been previously shaved.

Perceiving that Miss Cope's presence in some way excited her, he ordered that lady to desist from coming into the room. This was no small relief to her, as she had been twelve nights without undressing. Miss Neville became as gentle as a lamb, the crisis arrived, her delirium departed, and the doctor returned to town.

The happy change was a vast relief to the terrified inmates of Sunville. The house was set to rights by degrees, until no vestige of the grand entertainment remained except the temporary plank-walled eastern saloon, with its long tank of still, stagnant water, and its grand archway, now dreary and bare, stripped of its drapery and lamps. The workmen were ordered by Mrs Neville to abstain from restoring this part of the house to its former condition until the pleasure of their young mistress should be known ; in the mean time the three ladies dined in the breakfast-room. The grapery was dressed up for the autumn ; the grapes were all pulled, and the vines nailed to the wall wherever they had yielded to the weight of their rich bunches of fruit ; the fuchsias and pelargoniums were re-earthed ; the cestus of Venus was found and carefully delivered to the waiting-maid ; and the little building assumed a neat, trim appearance ; but the autumn winds, as they sighed and whistled through the open windows, seemed to wail over a scene that had once passed within those narrow walls, but could not be repeated either there or elsewhere for evermore, by those who had then shared in it. And thus Miss Neville began to return to a world that was to be hereafter a changed one for her ; great pleasure at her recovery was felt by all her surrounding tenantry, for they were much attached to her ; but there was to be no harvest-home, no rural festival, as had been intended ; their poor dependents must sym-

pathize with the great, whether they will or no, in deeds at least, if not in heart and spirit.

Lady Caroline, on her part, had, during the same interval, advanced a little in health. Her mind was relieved by her father's consent to promote her marriage with Dr Campbell, and her temper, accordingly, so far improved, that she carefully attended to the rules prescribed, drove out every day, appeared at the dinner-table, took a modicum of nourishment, and counted every moment until her "lover" should return from his tedious tour. Lord Fitzarthur had not yet put his plan of going abroad into execution. He was much assuaged in his angry feelings towards Campbell. Miss Bolton had convinced him that the "dispensary doctor," though he was such a thing, had not acted in any way that could be called in question; that he had not courted nor unduly sought the distinction he was likely to attain; and in fact a suspicion now arose in his mind that of the two the ardour was the strongest on the side of his sister. Yes, positively, his father and Caroline were beside themselves; the one infatuated about a man who appeared so cold-hearted, it was a doubt he cared for any woman in the world; the other encouraging her, instead of checking her and reasoning with her—shaking a skull and cross-bones over such prudent persons as dared to suggest any species of remedy, except an immediate gratification of her shameful whim; and probably on the brink of disgracing himself by making to the "dispensary doctor" such advances as he ought to scorn to make to any peer of the realm. These considerations led him to alter his plan, and settle that he would, painful as it was, remain at the Abbey for the present, and, if possible, save two people from disgrace, who appeared perfectly unable to take care of themselves or their own honour.

And we see Dr Campbell, too, once more sitting in his little parlour at Cypress Cottage. He returned from his tour much improved and invigorated in health and spirits. Miss Neville's progress towards complete recovery removed an immense weight from his mind. Dr Strong had written to him regularly, and he had suffered intense anxiety while she continued in danger, but now affairs had taken a happy turn—she would soon be well, and would then probably leave the country for a considerable period. The evening he returned home he hastened to the Vicarage, and found Milly pretty well though very pale, and de-

lighted to see him, and poor Davenport scarcely less so. The next morning another anxious attached friend was early at his levée, and manifold was the information that Edmund had to give with regard to his exploits in the sanitary line ; how he had blooded the blacksmith when on the point of getting an inflammation, and sent him back to his shoeing in two days ; how he had lowered the pulse of young Dan the butcher's son, supposed to be in consumption, from a hundred and thirty to eighty, by judicious doses of digitalis ; and averted croup from the widow Wilkins's only child, when on the point of becoming suffocated.

"The dice were wonderfully in your favour," laughed Campbell, "you might just as well have killed all these people : is this all you did ? I forgot to ask Davenport whether he had many funerals while I was away."

Before Edmund could suit himself in a sufficiently caustic repartee, their attention was attracted by the appearance of Lord Northwood's livery servant at the gate, and a letter was directly after given to Campbell. He read as follows :—

"MY DEAR DR CAMPBELL,

"I hope you have enjoyed your excursion. We have missed you very much, I assure you, during your absence. My daughter has been *seriously* ill, and I was under the necessity of sending to London for good advice, and although she has benefited by the skill of my friend, Dr H——, she can be by no means left to herself ; there is a want of energy, and other circumstances, which render it quite impossible that she can do without careful watching, and other kind attentions on your part ; in fact, *you cannot be too much with her*. I request that you will come out here this afternoon, and, if possible, make arrangements for staying to dinner.

"Yours faithfully,

"NORTHWOOD."

"Here is a reaction with a vengeance," said Campbell, showing the note to Edmund.

Edmund said he guessed they would not be able to do long without Campbell's visits ; that he was aware Dr H—— had been sent for ; that they had got a great fright about her Ladyship, and that Sarah had been detained at the Abbey much longer than

was convenient to her. Campbell thought to himself that all his old annoyances were going to begin again—Lady Caroline's embarrassing "attentions," Lord Fitzarthur's unwarrantable rudeness ; but the conduct of the latter he was determined should not interfere with his conscientious discharge of his professional duties : let the young gentleman speak to him or not, just as he pleased, he would go to the house when Lord Northwood sent for him ; he had just lost the acquaintance of the Nevilles, and all the country would notice it if Strong was found installed as the family physician. Now, if there were to be a breach also between him and the Northwoods, what would be thought of him, but that he was an improper, dangerous person, who had to be banished from the domestic circles of the noble and the good, he being perfectly blameless all the time. He would not succumb ; he would fight manfully against the demon that was haunting and persecuting him in every path he trod. He would attend Lady Caroline as usual, but would stay only as long as was necessary, would never dine there, and the frequency of his visits should be entirely determined by the requirements of the patient. He wrote an answer to say that he would be at the Abbey at two o'clock, but that to dine was out of his power, as he was engaged to Mr Davenport.

To the Abbey then he went, and arrived there about the time he had named. He was shown into the drawing-room, where he found the Earl and his daughter. The former shook him cordially by the hand, and welcomed him home. Lady Caroline rose to meet him, but she became overpowered when she beheld him once more actually before her. His face had a brighter, healthier look, and his eyes a livelier expression, than she had ever seen in them before. He burst on her like an Indian sunrise, without a twilight, which suddenly shatters the deep gloom, and kindles up every object with light and life and gladness.

They shook hands, but she did not speak, and with difficulty tottered back to the sofa. He was a good deal shocked when he saw her ; he had not the slightest expectation of finding her looking so ill. He sat down by her, and made the kindest inquiries respecting her health, regretting that she seemed so weak. She was certainly not so ill as her doubly-pallid face and extreme agitation would now imply ; but it was not his part to suppose that his appearance could have had so forcible an effect.

The Earl discreetly withdrew, not only that the doctor might put the necessary questions, but that the lover might whisper the

long-suppressed vows which he trusted his note had given him sufficient encouragement to unfold. He went into the dining-room, and began to walk up and down there; but he had not been long engaged in this exercise when he saw Campbell cantering away from the house. He hastened back to the drawing-room.

"How short a time he stayed! What did he say?"

"I'm sure I forget what he said," she answered; "yes, he said my pulse was not so bad as—I really don't know what; and that I was to go on with Dr H——'s medicines, and to dine at one o'clock and then drive out, and after that lie down for an hour, and to walk very little; everything that is disagreeable he bid me do. I shall be more alone than ever—not even dining with you. I cannot go on with such a life; it will kill me."

"But I am surprised he did not sit longer, and chat a little," said her father.

Caroline answered pettishly: "He took out his watch and said he must take care and not be late for those people he is to dine with, and he had to visit Mr Bolton before he went home."

"However, he will come to-morrow, and remain to dinner, perhaps," pursued the Earl.

"No, indeed, not till the day after; he said every second day was plenty."

"Plenty for what?"

"Why, for doctoring me, I suppose. Papa, I am quite tired talking; I think I must go to bed."

"No such thing, my love, no such thing; you are getting better, and if you give up again it may be very dangerous. Indeed, I think he might have managed to remain a little longer, and tell you something about his excursion. Where has he been?"

"I don't know on earth. I am not surprised he hurried off; for anything he could tell, Fitzarthur might come in and turn him out."

"Oh! Freddy would hardly do that when he knows I sent for him. Besides, he has spoken more justly of him latterly. No; the thing is, Campbell is such a modest, honourable man, it is a nice point to manage him. Now I am confident, if he was visiting here simply as a friend he would be sure to come to-morrow, as he is hurried to-day, and would sit a long time with you; but being in attendance on your health at present, he fears that coming every day would look like pushing for a daily fee;

and he would spurn anything of that kind, I well know. He requires particular treatment ; he will hang back for ever, if—I must consider the matter,” he muttered to himself. “Now, dear, you go out to drive.”

“Indeed I won’t, papa. I am so lonely and so unhappy, I don’t know what to do. Drive by myself!—dine by myself! Then lie down by myself, with no one but those abominable women-servants near me ! I had rather be dead, and I will die !”

She then went to her room, leaving her poor father in a most perplexed and wretched state of mind. The next day she was in a still worse mood. She stayed in bed till one o’clock, her new dinner-hour ; and when she rose, refused to eat any ; also declined going out to drive. She was so lonely ; no one to go with her ; there was more society obtained by staying at home with the parrot ; her brother never chatted to her now—he seemed to have taken some dislike to her ; Miss Bolton had her own domestic concerns to attend to—it could not be expected she was to be continually at the Abbey ; *other people* were afraid of the house—she knew who frightened them away.

Her father heard all this in silence ; he had made up his mind on some points. After dinner he said to his son, looking him full in the face, and joining to the look a very significant nod, “Caroline is worse to-day—considerably worse.”

“I am sorry her doctor’s visit yesterday did her no good,” answered Fitzarthur.

“Upon my word it would be very odd if it did—very odd indeed. A proud, shy, sensitive man as any in the world : I am sure it gives him great pain to come here after your cavalier behaviour, to say the least of it ; he hurries in, does his professional duty, and flies off again—I suppose dreading to meet you ; that is not the footing on which things are to be placed, if we wish to save her life. Now the fact is, you must, if you desire to act with common justice to your sister and him, and to atone in some measure for what I am convinced you now regret,—you really must call on Campbell to-morrow morning, and sit awhile, and convey a request from me that he will dine with us any day he chooses.”

The son answered : “I do regret, sir, that I misunderstood Dr Campbell’s conduct on the night to which you are perpetually alluding ; but I think it would be best for all parties to let that affair go to sleep. To revive it now by an apology on my part—”

"I don't want you to apologize, or to revive it now," cried the Earl. "All I ask you to do is to call on him, and be friendly and cordial to him."

"If you invite him here, sir, I have resolved to treat him civilly—in short, just as I did before ; but as to make such an advance as to go to his cottage and sit with him—a thing I have never done hitherto—it is rather too much to expect that from me, when you know I regard an alliance with him as the greatest blot that ever sullied our scutcheon."

"Is this your ultimatum ?"

"It certainly is, sir."

"I, on my part, will acquaint him to-morrow of the position in which he is to stand for the future in this house."

"Good heavens ! father, what do you mean ?"

"He shall know by this time to-morrow whether I think him a disgrace to my scutcheon or not."

If Lord Fitzarthur was inclined to say anything more he had no opportunity ; for his father, having enunciated these last words, precipitately left the room.

At tea-time Caroline made her appearance, so the conversation was general, but cold and constrained. At breakfast the next morning the Earl was silent ; his son scrutinized his face, and thought he observed something unusually resolute in its expression. He said nothing. What could he say ? He must let things take their course. He was too much agitated and too anxious to leave the scene of action, though he felt a strong wish to fly to the farthest end of the demesne. He knew his father was going to take some decisive step, and he was now doubtful whether Campbell's feelings towards his sister were such as to warrant the Earl in rushing forward with an unsolicited consent. What a horrible prospect for his sister, if Campbell did not wish to marry her, and might accept her merely for the sake of her fortune, and the advantages her high station might obtain for him ! The unhappy young man could not sit down ; he walked from room to room, and at last stood mournfully in the study window watching the flies as they crossed about the pane. Caroline dressed and went to the drawing-room to be ready to receive Dr Campbell when he came. The Earl took his seat in the dining-room, and ordered the footman to bring the doctor in to him when he arrived. Things were in this state when about noon poor Campbell rode up to the door.

"I am desired by my Lord to show you into the dining-room, sir, where he is waiting for you," said the man.

Campbell accordingly proceeded thither. The Earl advanced most affectionately to meet him, but when they joined hands Campbell felt that of the old man was trembling a little. There was a restlessness, too, in his eye, and a quiver on his lip, that was quite unusual with him ; and Campbell was conscious of a strange oppression about his own heart—an undefined foreboding of evil.

"How is Lady Caroline?" he said, anxiously.

"Pretty well, pretty well. But no. What am I saying? She is very indifferent ; worse a good deal—"

He stopped short, apparently agitated. Campbell was surprised. Lord Northwood seemed to be striving to break something very unpleasant about her to him. How was it that the person who took the deepest interest in her should be afraid to tell the whole to one whose interest in her was comparatively remote?

He said nothing ;—he knew not what to say.

The Earl resumed. "You did not come here yesterday ; she felt that very much."

"I assure you, my Lord, my coming was wholly unnecessary, —would have been rather injurious. It is very dispiriting to invalids to have their complaint, whatever it is, presented daily before them by a medical man ;—the same questions asked, the same directions given, their mind kept constantly fixed on the same melancholy topic ;—it is enough to kill them ; I wish her to amuse herself and forget herself ;—I need not have come to-day, only it might appear neglectful not to do so." He stopped.

The Earl looked at him steadily : perhaps he thought to himself,—“Is it possible he does not fathom my meaning?”

He began again :—“Why do you merely talk of professional calls? Did I not say something in my note of Wednesday that might give you some perception of my sentiments towards you?”

Then Campbell recollected the underscored words, and a sudden light flashed across him ;—he turned red and then pale. The Earl saw the change, and of course misinterpreted it. He ran to him and caught his hand.

“My dear Campbell ! your delicacy, your self-restraint, and your silent, hopeless devotion deserve all praise. To me they are far beyond rank and wealth. Place no further check on your

feelings,—she is yours with my full approbation, and all that I can I will do to make you and her affluent and happy.”

Campbell withdrew his hand :—“ My Lord—”

“ Say nothing ; I have anticipated all ; I understand your feelings perfectly. Why should I give one of your exquisite sensibility the pain of uttering words derogatory to your dignity ? Will she not be happy ? and is not happiness what we are all in search of ? Come, come ! ”

But Campbell continued leaning against the table and did not move. His Lordship looked at him and became convinced that he was paralysed with joy. He left him fixed where he stood, darted off, ran into the drawing-room, seized his daughter by the hand (who followed him mechanically, not knowing the meaning of his conduct), and led her straight up to Campbell. He then placed her hand in his.

“ Be happy, my children ! a father’s blessing and a father’s love attend you ! ”

Having thus said, he left them hastily, and made for the study. There still stood Lord Fitzarthur with his forehead leaning against the pane.

“ Oh ! Freddy, are you here ? it is all over,—all over, and they are as happy as possible ! ”

“ What is over, sir, and who are happy ? ”

“ Why the *éclaircissement* has taken place, and we all understand one another, and the lovers are happy, with every impediment removed. Dear, dear, what a nervous business it is ! Fitzarthur, my love, get me a glass of wine.”

Fitzarthur rang, and the footman appeared.

“ Tell the butler to send Lord Northwood a glass of wine.”

“ Yes, my Lord.” Then bowing to the Earl ; “ What wine will your Lordship please to have ? ”

“ Sherry, I think—yes,—sherry, and, Vincent, a biscuit or two.”

“ Yes, my Lord.”

The Earl sat down in his leathern chair and began to recover his breath. The wine and biscuit were brought, and after having refreshed himself he seemed quite as usual.

“ Freddy, I have given Campbell my full consent.”

“ He having first asked it, I suppose, sir.”

“ He was so overcome he could hardly speak ; you have no idea of the depth of his feelings.”

Lord Fitzarthur knew it would be useless, and even felt that

it would be going further than a son's rights extended, to sift his father any further as to who directly took the initiative, but he strongly suspected it was the Earl. It was a wretched business from beginning to end, but he could not fail to perceive that matters had now gone so far that the wisest course,—the only remaining one in fact,—was to make the best of it. Neither could he, in justice to the others, avoid acknowledging to himself that his sister was the most to blame of all the three. He said quietly :—

“I hope he will love her, and make her happy.”

“Love her ! he adores her !” cried Lord Northwood, looking indignant, not so much with his son, as with the floating possibility that Campbell did not worship his daughter.

“Is he to dine here to-day, sir ?” asked Fitzarthur.

“I don't know yet, but if he does, are you prepared to treat him kindly ?”

“As kindly as I told you that I would yesterday, sir,” answered he, and then left the room.

We last saw Dr Campbell and Lady Caroline with their hands clasped together, by the intervention of a too kind and officious father. If Caroline could have noticed anything in her extreme agitation, she must have perceived that the hand on which hers rested was damp, and as cold as marble. When her bewilderment subsided a little she burst into tears. Her next impulse was to say :

“Oh, Dr Campbell ! what a kind, good father I have ! Shall it not be the business of our lives to make him as happy as we possibly can ?”

What could he answer ? She stood beside him looking worse than ever ;—a shadow, a wreck, and drowned in tears. A word of rejection would be sure to kill her, and how could he speak that word to her, after having let the right moment for expressing the real state of his mind pass,—namely, when the Earl introduced the subject, and before he brought his daughter in ? Now it would be mean, cowardly, barbarous, to say to her what he had feared, or rather had been too much stunned, to say to her father. He saw there was some terrible mistake somewhere, for he scarcely thought she had coolly told her father he loved her but was too timid to step forward, that being certainly the impression the Earl was under. He gently disengaged his hand and withdrew to a chair some distance off, leaving her standing alone in the middle

of the room ;—not the first “ Caroline ” who found herself in that trying and humiliating situation.

“ Lady Caroline,” said he, “ your father is doing me too much honour ;—I am not prepared for it ;—I don’t deserve it.”

She answered tremulously, but still with some degree of surprise: “ Papa does not estimate people according to their rank and fortune, but by their personal qualities ; were you not sensible of this when you asked his consent ? ”

So she was fully persuaded that he had proposed for her to her father ;—it would be madness to attempt to throw cold water on a project that had, in her opinion, just originated in himself. Whoever was to blame, he had certainly got his neck into a noose from which he was very unlikely to extricate it, and as usual without the least fault on his own part ; it was enough to drive a man out of his reason. He was silent for a while and then inquired for her health.

She said she felt stronger ; he ordered her to take her dinner and go out to drive ; for himself,—he said he had a violent headache and was obliged to return home directly ;—he could not sit up.

“ I will do everything you desire me,” answered she, with a look that seemed to acknowledge a new obligation to obey him. “ I hope you will be better to-morrow and that we shall see you,” she added.

“ I will call when I am able,” was the answer, and thus the “ lovers ” parted.

Dr Campbell returned to his cottage, and threw himself on the sofa to think. To think ! there was no use in thinking ; —thought, intellect, and prudence were of no service to him ; he was worsted and buffeted on every occasion. Those who were inferior to him in all the qualities of the mind obtained the mastery over him, and shaped his lot according to their own obstinate, stupid determination. Mr Warner had first tortured and crushed his affections, sacrificed him at the shrine of ambition, and made his entire after-life a mistake. Now Lord Northwood was coming forward to alter the whole working of the machine which had been going wrong for many a year, but for which his Lordship had just devised a new apparatus to make it go more falsely still. Mr Warner tore his daughter out of his arms when the wrench carried away his vitals at the same time. Lord Northwood was flinging his daughter into his arms when the so-called

boon fell like a leaden weight on his heart, depriving it of whatever little elasticity and vitality it still retained. He was spurned by the great when their favour and smiles would have nurtured and brought to maturity the dominant sentiment on the development of which depended the real earnest purpose of his life ; he was courted by the great when the baubles they held up to him were a mere *ignis fatuus*, not even pleasing to his eye, but simply dancing over the marsh in which were to be stifled all his genuine emotions and affections. He had been rather hasty in congratulating himself at having come off so well in the late affair with Miss Neville, without injury either to her or himself ;—he was still happy indeed that this large-hearted young woman was safe, and that her secret was known to none ; but, as to himself,—he was not much indebted to the demon that governed his lot ; he had been extricated from one labyrinth only that he might be plunged into another, from the involutions of which he were a shrewd man, and one of many resources, who could hope to step out once more into the open plain with safety to his own honour, and to the peace and welfare of those who were associated with him in the maze. But he would make an effort ; he had been most shamefully taken by surprise ; in boxing and wrestling it was all fair play, but when a net was suddenly thrown over a fellow, though he might lie under it for a time, stupefied at the wily trick, yet when he recovered his senses he had a right to struggle, burst the meshes, and be free !

At this stage of his cogitations, looking idly through the window he saw Mr Davenport coming in at the cottage-gate. It suddenly occurred to him that he would tell the whole to him. It was a wearying thing to be always without sympathy or advice in one's troubles. Davenport's keen practical sense might suggest some expedient ; there was nothing in this business that he need be ashamed of and jealously cloak ; his conduct at the Abbey had been irreproachable, and whatever shame there was, attached to his *persecutors* ;—yes, he would consult Davenport, though such a volatile, quizzing fellow was not the person he would choose, if he had a choice. Neither did he view it as an unseemly thing to take Milly's husband into his counsels as to how he might escape a connection which it would be for the benefit of the husband he should form ; because if Milly was not in the world he would be no less anxious to avoid marrying a girl he did not like ; and Davenport, or any man of proper feeling, ought to wish to break

off a negotiation that would, if brought to a completion, secure the misery of the girl in question. Finally, to quiet his conscience thoroughly, he resolved, if he could escape from his present toils, to leave this country for ever, and let Davenport enjoy his wife, unmolested by any further visits from him, which certainly estranged her from her husband to whom she belonged, if not by right divine, at least by the law of the land, and by her being the mother of his six children.

Davenport entered in his usual spirits: "Ho, my boy, I hardly expected to find you at home, thinking you would be all day in the field striving to sap the pile of maladies that has been accumulating during your absence. I am going over to Brookbank to a clerical dinner,—eight or ten of us are to meet together to discuss topics connected with our profession—"

"Whew!" interrupted Campbell, with a look of disgust; "I'm sure I'm glad I am not to be there."

"You there indeed! it's a pity but you should. Don't go till you are asked, and you will be safe enough."

"It is curious," rejoined Campbell, who was completely out of temper, and forgot, in his desire to vent himself, that he wanted some advice from Davenport, and ought not to irritate him;—"it is curious how you holy men always require to season your disquisitions with some of the substantial good things of this world. I suppose it really is necessary that something choice should be swallowed along with them in order to enable you to digest certain doctrines. The most monstrous assertion rides triumphant on a saddle of mutton, and the wildest interpretation of a 'text' comes winged with probability when forwarded by a brother parson on the pinion of a pheasant or a grouse."

"I do not choose to converse with you on divinity," said Davenport; "I might as well discuss metaphysics with George the Third, or enlarge on the rights of women to Mehemet Ali. Something has gone wrong with you to-day I plainly see, for I often observe that when there is any jar in your own little world you are in the habit of falling foul of all public institutions, political or divine. I hope you are not too cross to do something I was going to ask of you,—just to come over and take a look at that poor woman of mine, as I must run away from her; she is lying on the sofa and took no breakfast; you might talk to her and give her something."

"Of course I will go and talk to her, but I will not give her

anything ; she will be quite well in due time if you do not undertake the management of her."

"Oh, Heaven knows I will leave her all to yourself ! She will be sorry to find you looking so pale ; she was remarking on Wednesday how well you seemed."

"Ah, the serene look and the even beat of the pulse do not last long ; 'Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards.'"

"Well, I am glad you are softening a little and quoting Scripture."

"I don't know what you mean by 'quoting Scripture,' " said Campbell testily ; "I am quoting the results of a man's observations on human life ; just what any serious person would make."

"I am sure you are in some trouble—will you tell me what it is ? " cried Davenport.

"Lord Northwood has offered me a fee for my services, which I am quite unwilling to accept of."

"Whew !" said Davenport, with a low, long whistle, and a comical smile. "You are positively the greatest self-tormentor I ever met. Put it in your pocket, man ! no doubt you well deserve it. Though it may be exceedingly handsome, do you think he will miss it ? but it will be particularly acceptable to you after your expensive trip."

"It is quite the reverse of 'exceedingly handsome,' " answered the other ; "he will miss it very much when he loses it ;—and it would not fit into my pocket."

"You are talking riddles, and I have no time to waste ; it is a pretty long drive to that place."

"Well then ;—Lord Northwood has offered me his daughter as a reward, I presume, for my services : no wonder I was Scriptural to-day when I was carried back to the patriarchal times."

Davenport looked at him steadily to see whether he was joking ; judging by his expression that he was not, a clear burst of joy broke through the cloud of amazement and doubt that had at first overshadowed his features. He caught Campbell's hand : "My dear fellow, I congratulate you with all my heart and soul ! now why could not you tell me the minute I came in, and not go on first in that way, dallying and playing with your happiness, and leaving me to fancy some great misfortune had befallen you ? I never again will quarrel with the caprices of Fortune ; she has behaved nobly to you, and you deserve it all."

"I do deserve these tricks, I allow," replied Campbell, "but for all that, I'll try to baffle them. I want you to suggest some mode of escape."

"I wonder you go on with this affectation to an attached friend like me! Let us discuss this affair as it deserves; now, when I am willing to be serious, you won't join me; it is no joke, I can tell you—going to be married—it is a very awful step."

"I was never further from joking in my life!" cried Campbell; "there is no one feels the awfulness of entering into that state more than I do, and it is because of its intense importance that you see me in this miserable perplexity; I do not choose to form such a bond with a person I cannot love, and I never can love, respect, or honour Lord Northwood's daughter. Now do you understand me?"

"You have made your meaning thoroughly clear, and I am grievously disappointed—provoked. Why not like her? She is as loveable a girl as the most of them, I am sure. Not a bit proud nor affected; as ready for a simple life as any one I ever saw, I should say, with my limited opportunities of observing her; accomplished and refined like yourself;—and of course a splendid fortune!"

He brightened up again at the thoughts of such a hit. Campbell answered:—

"She may have this perfection, and that perfection, but it is not qualities and endowments that lay the foundation of happiness or misery, but likings and dislikings. It is attractions and sympathies that blend hearts together, and if you could lay your finger on the particular accomplishment, or virtue, to which you attributed your love for a woman, I would tell you you did not love her; your affections first twine round an object, and when you adore her, you straightway invest her with a thousand perfections that no one else can perceive. That is the course of true love. Shakespeare knew something of it. Now, I hope you understand that, however you may catalogue her perfections, and put the list into my hand, it will never beget love in me."

"Stuff!" said Davenport, "you are getting romantic, as you generally do when it is quite inexpedient; I just mentioned a number of advantages under which, though her rank is so much above yours, you might both live comfortably together, without all this ideal love which is rarely to be had. You have often said you did not like your profession when you first adopted it; now,

I suppose Lord Northwood will make you quite independent of it : do tell me what he said."

Campbell gave him a full account of the rapid transaction, and how the young lady was brought and delivered into his hands, and how he was not allowed to open his lips on the occasion.

"Well, so much the better," answered Davenport; "you might have said something you would repent of afterwards. It is evident she fell in love with you,—her father found it out,—judged you to be in the same state (as you ought, you villain !), and made known his acquiescence to you in the manner you have described. There is nothing he won't do for you : he will take you to live with him ; you give up your profession ; you will have in exchange for it fortune, high position, the best society, the best books, the best amusements, the best living, an adoring wife, and a most amiable father-in-law. Bless me ! if I was not married to the dearest creature in the world" (Campbell gave a bitter sigh), "whom I would not exchange for any one,—I would say that such a lot must satisfy my highest ambition."

"You, as a clergyman and a showy preacher, with your conversational talents, and your attractive manners and appearance, might get on quite differently, I allow, but for me, such a position were insupportable—I scarcely know whether I could face it for one I loved—but now I loathe the idea of it, and call on you to assist me in devising some honourable mode of retreat."

"I protest, Campbell, I do not know how I can conscientiously do so. If a person bent on suicide were to come and consult you as to what poison you would particularly recommend,—how would you answer him ?"

"I would advise him to blow out his brains like a man, and to have nothing to do with those slow, treacherous agents," said Campbell.

Davenport laughed.

"I can do nothing with you. I must be off now, and do you go and tell Mrs Davenport of the frightful scrape you are in, and perhaps she will bring you to reason."

"No : I will not tell her at present ; and I charge you not to mention it to her, or any one else."

"Of course I will not ; I never thought of telling it to any one but her, she would be so delighted."

"She would !" thought Campbell.

When Davenport approached the door he paused. It occur-

red to him that there were other persons who were to be considered in this affair as well as Campbell. Precipitate as Lady Caroline was, and highly blamable for setting her heart on a man who she might have seen cared nothing for her, still it was unfair towards her to urge him to accept of her for the sake of her worldly advantages, without any regard for the wretched life she was likely to lead, wedded to one who thirsted for love, but from which he felt he was for ever divorced if he sought for it in a union with her. It would be a charity to save her. He sat down again.

"By the by!" said he, "is not the lady very unwell at present?"

"Indeed she is: in no state to be married."

"And could not you ask her father to put off the marriage until she was better?"

"Why, that would be engaging myself to go on with it when she was better."

"But you have nearly consented already, as well as I can make out; your saying nothing to his Lordship was a tacit agreement. Now your only resource is to manœuvre, so as to get off honourably. Say she must wait until she is *much* better, and perhaps she may never get better, or something may turn up to stop it; or if they won't consent to put it off—then you must make the best of it, and try and be kind to her while she lives, which will not be long, perhaps, and then you have her fine fortune to—"

"Fortune!" interrupted Campbell; "do you think I would take her fortune under such circumstances? It would be like robbing the Earl. If I married her knowing her to be very ill, and if she died in a short time, I would give him back every penny. I don't want their money under any pretence, and the only thing that would let me answer to my conscience for marrying a person I did not love, would be the certainty of losing and not gaining by her expected death with regard to money matters. I should then feel I was taking her out of pity, and not from self-interest."

"These are fine speeches," said Davenport, "but still you do not appear at all likely to make her happy, and I hope you will have nothing to do with her until you undergo a thorough change of heart."

"You have come right at last, for you have put off the mar-

riage *sine die*, and I hope her father will do the same," said Campbell.

"Well, what have you settled to say to him?" asked Davenport.

"I have written to Dr H——, who visited her lately, and examined her case very minutely, and I have asked him whether he thinks her seriously ill, and I expect an answer this evening."

"Then, if he thinks unfavourably of her," said Davenport, "you tell the Earl to-morrow that the marriage must be postponed for some time, and there is no telling what may occur in the interval."

When Davenport was gone Campbell hurried to the Vicarage, and found Milly still lying on the sofa. She was gladdened at the sight of him, and sprang to meet him, but he put his arms about her and laid her on her couch again.

"Sweet, you are very sick, I hear."

O yes; I have not eaten nor drunk anything to-day; I was poorly at breakfast, and wished to take a little coffee without bread, but Arthur came over to me with an egg only half done, and wanted to feed me, and that disgusted me so that I turned away from the table, and have been lying here almost ever since."

"Provoking fellow!" muttered Campbell. "But he means well."

"Surely he does; and I am obliged to him."

"So you ought, sweetest. I will get you something that you will be able to eat."

He went down to the kitchen, and returned in ten minutes, bringing the legs of a fowl, which he had salted, peppered, and grilled on the gridiron.

"Now, Milly, you will like this."

She sat up, and took it with much relish. While he was mixing some brandy and water for her, he said:—

"Mrs Marsh has just been paying me a great compliment. While I was cooking the chicken she observed that Nature seemed to have made me expressly for whatever I happened to be doing at the current moment. She is now puzzled which I ought to be, head-cook in the queen's kitchen, or leader of the choir when there is a state concert, or consulting physician when any of the royal family is in some critical situation."

"She is not wrong, Robert; you are wasted and lost in this obscure village."

"No, no, Milly; I am not wasted where I can be of use to you; that is my only business in the world, and if I am to be separated from you—then let me die;—my occupation will be over."

Milly wondered why he was so sad, having been in such good spirits the day before yesterday. She asked him to read for her, which he did; then, feeling better, she got up, and they both sang while she played. Afterwards he dined with her, and she had some more broiled fowl, and some oysters, which he had got cooked with particular care; and after dinner they talked—that pleasant, familiar, playful talk, which, had any third person overheard, he could not have believed that any of it proceeded from the lips of the cold, stiff Northwood doctor.

But the time of his departure had arrived; the post was come in, and he must hasten to see what the letter contained. It was dark—just the time when the two doves should nestle closer to one another; but he is gone, and she is alone once more on the sofa; his voice is still floating in the air, but soon it will be only remembered music. Why did heaven make him such a man, or why was he not the father of her children?

When he got home he found the letter on his table. Dr H—— expressed a very indifferent opinion of Lady Caroline; care, attention to diet, application of remedies, might do a good deal, but it would not be easy to prevent the disease from gaining head, though he had not told her poor father so: for a month at least before he was sent for she had been mismanaging herself and fretting inordinately about something; she might live a couple of years, more or less; if he had been consulted in time it would have been different; he marvelled why they did not send for Campbell. He described the case minutely, and Campbell on reading it (he had shrunk from examining it himself for obvious reasons), was convinced also that there was no hope of an ultimate recovery. Gloomily he hung over the letter, veiling his eyes with his hand. As usual, everything unfavourable was traceable to him; he was the cause of the young lady's secret wretchedness, which had been chiefly instrumental in giving her disease its dangerous character, and, in addition, she had been kept without timely advice, because his presence was dangerous to her peace. He began desperately to excuse himself for his wrong-doings in other cases, because when he acted with perfect propriety the result was still the same—misery, death! Yet it was some comfort

to think he might completely escape this marriage ; the Earl would not be so infatuated as to refuse to wait till she got better, and that was not likely to be the case. He spent a restless night, wakening every half-hour ; he was in the state in which any other man might be who had proposed to his lady-love, and given her " three days to consider," and had arrived at the night before his final doom.

The next morning, after breakfast, he went to his room to prepare for going to the Abbey with Dr H——'s letter, and on returning to the parlour he was amazed to find Lord Northwood sitting very comfortably on the sofa.

" Ha ! my dear Campbell, good morning ! I have been taking an early ride (my servant is walking the horses up and down the road), and I thought I would just call in to see you. Caroline told me yesterday your head was so much affected you could not stay to dinner, as you wished. How do you feel to-day ? "

" Oh, quite well, thank you, my Lord ; this is an uncomfortable place for you ; I am ashamed of having no better room to receive you in."

" I see nothing amiss about it," answered the Earl ; " after all, what can a man require to sit on but a chair or a sofa, and you have both here ; we get a habit of cramming our houses with rubbish, and calling it first a luxury, then a comfort, next a necessary, and so on. I suppose you will come to dinner at the Abbey to-day ; whatever little business is to be done should be commenced immediately ; this interval is very agitating to a female, particularly one in her weak state ; but I think she is getting better now that matters are cleared up. I have a letter written to my solicitor in London, to beg he will come down to me for a few days, and then everything can be easily and rapidly transacted."

Campbell strove to get in a word.

" My Lord, I had a letter from Dr H—— last night."

" Eh, had you ? and is he satisfied with her progress ? "

" He thinks her very delicate indeed."

" So he said when he was here ; but he assured me she was likely to get perfectly well if properly managed, and if her mind was made tranquil, which I think it is."

" Her present situation should not be changed until she is much stronger," said Campbell.

" What ! " said the Earl quickly, " did H—— say so ? "

" My Lord, he knows nothing about these family plans. He

told me exactly how he found her, and what he thought of her, and from this I deduce that she is not equal to go through what you know is a very awful and trying passage in any one's life. I speak entirely with a view to her benefit."

"Probably you do; indeed, I suppose you do, for you are speaking against your own wishes of course. But H—— gave *me* an opinion too, which was perfectly explicit; he said her mind must be set at ease, or, in fact, she would die; now, a long delay, under an engagement, is the most wearing thing to a young girl. I know what Lady Northwood went through. There were circumstances that delayed our marriage. I cannot bear to look back upon it; my child shall not be put through the same ordeal; she will grow better every day after she is married. You naturally take a narrow medical view of the case; I take a wider one, in which the physiological and the moral elements are blended."

The great all-embracing philosopher paused. Campbell would have smiled, if a hare, nearly baffled in all her doublings, and run down, could have done so.

"I still think, my Lord, I am right. Yesterday I did not know Dr H——'s opinion."

"H——'s opinion! I know H——'s prior opinion, expressed to me with great feeling and earnestness. I'm sure you mean well, but I can't and won't give in to what I know will be fatal. Out of this room I do not stir until you yield to my decision."

Campbell saw that his demon was triumphant; he might as well fight against the great arch-fiend himself.

There sat the man in possession of his parlour: what was he to do with him? He could not turn him out; he could not run away from him.

He said desperately, "As you please, my Lord."

His doom was sealed.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LOVERS.

“The two remain’d
Apart by all the chamber’s width, and mute
As creatures voiceless through the fault of birth,
Or two wild men supporters of a shield,
Painted, who stare at open space, nor glance
The one at other, parted by the shield.”—TENNYSON.

It soon became publicly known in the neighbourhood that Dr Campbell, principal of the Northwood Dispensary, was going to be married to the Lady Caroline Fitzarthur, only daughter of the Earl of Northwood, of Northwood Abbey. Great was the amazement of every one. Some were glad, some were envious, and others were actually angry, as if a personal injustice had been done to themselves. All were busy speculating on what could have caused the infatuation that led the noble family to accept of this daring suitor. Each person had his favourite theory, for which he fought as sturdily as two psychologists for their systems; and Campbell’s beauty and insinuating manners (when he chose to be insinuating) were the only clue that could be seized on, though a highly unsatisfactory one, for unravelling the mystery. As for the recipient of these singular favours of fortune, he presented the same melancholy, impassible face, the same calm and often absent manner, the same general impenetrable exterior, that had been his marked characteristics heretofore. Indeed, several observed that he was more silent, more depressed, and more irritable than was his wont even, and they appeared half-inclined to forgive him for his good luck, he bore it in a manner that was so little insulting to his less happy neighbours. But others, again, said he was only pretending, or that the weight of his felicity was so great that the operation of sustaining it converted it into almost a sorrow.

Some of his intimates tried “quizzing,” but they had not even the satisfaction of seeing him look red, foolish, annoyed; a few ironical words and a dark scornful look were all they could

obtain ; and the scorn, too, had the appearance of being directed towards themselves, rather than towards the notion that he was drawing such a very wonderful prize. So all parties by degrees found it better to let him alone,—he was “an odd fellow,”—and whatever luck he might hit upon, it was not likely to add very much to his happiness, he had “such a temper !” This thought at least was some consolation.

Edmund and Sarah Bolton of course knew the real history of the transaction, and they both were well aware there was no cause for congratulating Campbell. Sarah deeply regretted Caroline's infatuation ; she did not take interest enough in Campbell to lament that a union was forced on him for which he had no inclination ; she thought that any amiable, innocent young girl was too good to be sacrificed to him, labouring as he seemed to be under some load of guilt. Edmund on the contrary grieved that his dear master, with his fine feelings, and delicate appreciation of those females whom he considered really loveable, should thus, by a sort of sleight of hand, be whirled into a marriage with one to whom his breast must ever be as cold as marble. He knew Campbell had a soul made to adore, and that, moreover, that soul had some definite object of worship ; but he never could decide whether the idol was an ideal model, or whether he had found it among the breathing daughters of men ; he certainly gave strong indications sometimes of an actual experience of what Edmund conceived could hardly exist, save in the domain of fancy ; but all this was at the same time accompanied by such a yearning—such a hopeless longing—as offered testimony in favour of that state in which the mind is “diseased of its own beauty,” and “fevers into false creation.” But whether as a fulfilment of the ideal, or as a fac-simile of the actual, he saw that poor Caroline was equally and desperately deficient, and his ardent young heart, holding wealth and rank as nothing in the balance, weighed against the soul's longings, mourned for Campbell as for one whose life was to be henceforth a scenic performance, if it could be brought to even that measure of external decorum.

Mr Davenport did not at first know well whether he had better be glad or sorry for the manner in which the affair had terminated ; but his trusting, happy disposition soon led him to take the most favourable view of matters ; he was confident that Campbell could not long be placed in such an interesting con-

nection with a woman who was not positively forbidding, without coming on to love her in a short time ; it would have been better, to be sure, if she had been the object of his choice ; but in the jostlings and crossings of the world, it is out of the question that everything can alight in its proper place without being sometimes shoved out of it ; and that individuals with curiously carved prominences should, exactly in the right time and place, meet other individuals with correspondingly shaped hollows, into which, like the pieces of a dissected toy, they may nestle themselves, as into a long-sought home. Quite enough remained to render Campbell's life a very joyous and brilliant one, which no doubt it would be.

As to Milly,—what shall we say of her ? Campbell would not permit any one but himself to give her the intelligence, and he told her all that he knew of the manner in which he had been circumvented and compromised. He told her how hateful the union was to him in every way ; how he could never be more to Caroline than he had hitherto been,—her physician ; that, as to Milly, he would watch over her and hers as tenderly as ever ; that he would visit her every day if possible, and whatever time he spent with her would be counted as existence ; with his *patient* and her family he would vegetate, until perhaps some new phase of life might turn up, and his demon pause awhile in the infliction of torture and wrong. As to making vows that were a mockery, and that he had no right to make,—for he had made them once to another, and in his opinion they had not lost their binding force,—it was no fault of his,—he held himself absolved, though the pronouncing of them would be gall and wormwood to his soul.

We can repeat but little of what Milly said, or what she thought either : her feelings are too delicate and too sacred to be exposed ; she felt keenly that she had broken the vow herself, and that he ought to deem himself perfectly free ; she felt many pangs, and nearly fainted when he stopped speaking ; but she rallied, and said among other things, that it was all right, as far as entering into the married state went ; it was better for them both he should do so,—better he had done it long ago ;—but she regretted that Lady Caroline was so little to his taste. “ But still,” she said in conclusion, while her lip quivered, and the hand he held in his grew still colder, “ you may fashion her by degrees to meet you with sympathy, and understand your deep nature

you taught and moulded me,—why not another? You can enrich her meagreness out of your varied stores, and raise her low level to something of an equality with your noble heights. Would not this effort interest you, Robert?”

Every word she spoke was a dagger to him.

“No, no, Milly, I will do nothing of the kind. In the first place it would be useless to try; I cannot create a soil;—I cannot bestow intellect. And next, I cannot undo the misteachings of twenty years; suppose I were to mow down all the thick, rank external growth, the roots below are matted deep and strong, beyond my power to eradicate. And lastly and chiefest;—you read in your Bible that when Satan ruined a fair and perfect world, nothing less than the energy of a Deity could ransom and restore it anew. But I have neither the strength nor the spirit to remake my fallen world;—there let it lie. The plant that gave all its life and beauty and glory to my garden has been torn from me, and I will not—I cannot—nurture, foster, bestow skill and toil on another.”

This fragmentary sketch of their painful interview is all I will give; perhaps the reader thinks he has been too often presented with a view of the state of mind of these two beings with whom he may deem it wrong to sympathize.

Lord Fitzarthur, being very well satisfied that of the three performers in the late private theatricals at Northwood Abbey Dr Campbell was by no means the most to blame, treated him with his usual politeness and civility, upon which the latter ventured to request he would use his influence with Lord Northwood to induce him to postpone the marriage until Lady Caroline recovered her usual health. Fitzarthur undertook the commission very unwillingly; he knew there was little use in it. Rather a sharp engagement took place between him and his father, but it ended in the latter consenting at last to write to Dr H——, and leave it all to him. The answer arrived by return of post; the doctor said, that having carefully weighed the matter, he was decidedly of opinion that the choice should be left to the young lady herself. So her father immediately consulted “the young lady herself,” and her answer was the same as that given by Rebekah on a like occasion. From far down depths to which history can barely penetrate, and from which chronology shrinks fainting away, we gather up a momentary passage in the life of a damsel, and collating it with a parallel one in the life of a maiden of the nineteenth century, we find that among the nomadic

tribes of ancient Syria, and in the perfumed and gas-lighted saloons of modern England, the remarkable animal which we call a woman remains ever the same.

So nothing was left for the unfortunate Campbell but to make love and to be married. The latter he was satisfied to do according to the forms prescribed by the rubric ; the other duty he took the liberty of regulating according to his own private judgment. It was done as follows : he went duly to the Abbey every second day, as he did when he was attending her on other occasions ; he shook hands with her as usual, but now there was the stiff bow, without the seductive smile. Then succeeded the inquiries for her health in the wonted formal way, and a new prescription, or a command to go on as before, concluded this ceremony. Then of course he could not go away directly ; he must pass an hour at least with his " betrothed." He generally commenced by advising her to do some work ; it was very bad for her to sit listless and idle half the day. So, as the slightest hint from him was a law to her, the costly work-box was directly opened, and her neat well-taught fingers began to move dexterously over some useless piece of embroidery, gay with many-coloured silks. Having thus provided for her comfort and employment, he next proceeded to do the same office for himself. He took a book, and leaving her at the table, he sat down in the window, and was absorbed in its contents during the remainder of the visit. This advantage of holding his tongue he certainly enjoyed on the strength of his new position. In fact, he had in the most friendly manner assumed the husband's privileges before he had been endowed with the husband's rights. Formerly when he sat with her he had of course felt himself bound to chat and laugh all the time he stayed ; but his present post was no laughing matter. Sometimes she stole her eyes from her work and gazed on him as he reclined in the arm-chair, intent on his studies, looking like a beautiful picture. That he wished to marry her she never doubted ; her papa had quite satisfied her on that point, and rather frightened her by the character of religious enthusiasm with which he invested Campbell's passion. She wondered when it would assume something of a human consistency ; the divine lambent flame that was shooting round his heart seemed to be hardening it into adamant ; she wished it would abate in its fervour, and only soften it into wax. The Earl had talked of his being " paralysed with joy ; " people recovered other para-

lytic strokes ; but this seemed to keep its victim prostrate under its rigid grasp.

Poor Lady Caroline ! she had formed a most ravishing picture of the courtship period ;—a state of intense enjoyment, conjoined with glowing anticipations and far-stretching hopes : a state in which the present was so delicious that you would wish to prolong it *ad infinitum*, and the future at the same time so bewildering in its promise that you would again wish to devour the intermediate space, enchanting as it was, in order to arrive at the ultimate goal of culminating happiness. And all this with the divine Campbell as the second person in the sacred duality ! What could be the cause of the miserable failure ? Alas ! she had yet to learn that reciprocity of feeling must be engendered by something more than a beck and a smile, something more than an aristocratic “ask and have ;”—rather by long association together, by similarity of tastes and pursuits, by the existence in short of two fitnesses that will find one another without paternal interference, and when they have met, will, with a cohesion that startles the human dictator, remain united in spite of paternal legislation.

She ventured one day to ask him to come and sit at the table and read out to her ; he said he could not go to the table as it was near the fire, and though she required warmth, it was too early in the season for him to bear such heat ; he read out for a while however, remaining in the window. The next time he came she invited him to drive out in the chariot with her, but he could not possibly do so ; it would give him a palpitation,—so confined ; if it was the barouche he might. The next day the barouche was ordered, and he could not refuse. He handed her in ; she sat down by a window with her face to the horses ; he followed and sat next to the other window with his back to the horses, so they were as far as they could be from one another. He talked politely for a while, and then lapsed into silence. At last he took a ring out of his waistcoat pocket and looked fixedly at it. She was sure he was going to give it to her. She had a ring for every day in the year, and never cared about wearing any of them, but if she received this from his hand how she would have rejoiced ! how she would have loved it ! she would have kept it night and day on her finger. It had a rich light bridal look too ; it was composed of pearls and turquoises. However, after having pored over it as if he was reading cabalistic charac-

ters thereon, he returned it back to his waistcoat pocket. She then said :—

“Is that ring yours?”

“Not exactly; but I should think I might keep it always if I chose,” he answered.

“It is like a lady’s ring,” she observed.

“It is too delicate and beautiful for me, I allow, and yet I often wear it;” and so saying he took it out again and put it on his little finger, covering the whole with his glove. She then said with an attempt at playfulness in her manner: “Come, tell me really whose that ring is.”

“It is mine at present,” he answered curtly, and thus ended the dialogue on the ring.

It really belonged to Mrs Davenport (her husband’s gift before marriage as we mentioned), and Campbell was in the habit of pulling it off her finger and wearing it night and day himself for a space, and then, when he fancied the magic of her touch had worn off, he took it back to be re-magnetized, as it were, and placed it on her finger himself with many a

“sweet playful phrase that would seem absurd

To those who had ceased to hear such, or ne’er heard.”

In a week or so, he would snatch it away again, and so he beguiled his weariness and his solitude, poor fellow! He had had it now for some time, and he was to take it back the next day to be charmed once more.

Lord Northwood, who discreetly kept away from the drawing-room that he might not be a check on “the lovers,” saw nothing of Campbell’s coldness; he was all on the alert, getting the marriage articles prepared; they were not a very complicated document; the lawyer looked thunderstruck when he heard the gentleman had “nothing to settle on her Ladyship,” but the Earl cut him short by saying that the gentleman pleased him and his daughter, and that must be quite satisfactory enough for all who took interest in their happiness. The rebuked official proceeded with his business, making no further comment.

On the crowning occasion there was a full session, including the Earl, Lord Fitzarthur, Campbell, and the lawyer. Campbell was then informed that Lady Caroline was to have forty thousand pounds, which was to be settled on herself and her children; but if she died before him, and without offspring, he was to have

all. Against this he vehemently protested ; if such events as those contemplated were to take place he insisted that the whole should revert to the Lady's family : he would not sign the parchment on any other conditions.

The Earl was strenuous in opposing such unreasonable generosity ; if he had the misfortune of being bereaved of his dear wife, why should he wish to sink into poverty at the same time, and become worse off than he was before ? He trusted Campbell would be an old man when he lost his wife, and would that be a time to return to his profession ? What a blot upon his memory—for he hoped he would be in his grave then—to have his dear son-in-law left destitute ! The lawyer, too, looked amazed at Campbell, not thinking him an idiot, and yet unable to account for his behaviour on any other grounds. He carefully took a note of the case, in order probably to send it to Lincoln's Inn, to be put on record among the incredible occurrences in legal experience, as Campbell himself would have sent to the College of Surgeons in Edinburgh or London the case of a person who had had the smallpox twice, or of one who could not be salivated. After further expostulation, not being able to deny that he might be reduced to want some day or other, he consented to accept of three thousand pounds, and with this arrangement his noble friends were obliged to be content. Lord Fitzarthur formed a much better opinion of him than he had ever done before ; there was certainly some good stuff in the man, he was so high-minded and independent.

But while he was increasing in favour with the brother, he was becoming every day to the sister a greater source of wonder and mortification. If too much worship was his fault, she certainly shared it with him, but in her case worship was a rather figurative word ; it implied the superlative degree of love, which, far from enjoining a reticent, respectful homage, admitted of the tenderest but most refined familiarities. She resolved to throw up a rocket, and mark what would ensue. They were sitting alone as usual ; she by the fire, he in the window ; she directed a shy, tender glance towards him, and said :—"Robert !" Her whole soul seemed to fly to him on that winged word—the dear familiar Christian name, thus breathed for the first time.

He started as if a bullet had found his heart. No woman but Milly had ever called him Robert before. Since the sickly infant had writhed at the age of three days, under the shower of conse-

crated drops, this motherless, sisterless, lonely being had heard that name from Milly's lips alone ; of all earth's daughters, it seemed to be consecrated to her. He said confusedly :—

"Oh, Lady Caroline, do you mean me? can I do anything for your Ladyship?"

The tears started into her eyes.

"How can you address me in that way, knowing the event that is to occur in a short time?"

"In what way do you mean?"

"With 'Lady,' and 'your Ladyship;' it is very unkind."

"Pardon me, indeed I did not intend to be unkind ; there is nothing stiff in using a title any more than a name ; they are both conventional distinctions ; it is just as simple to say 'your Ladyship' to you as to say plain 'you' to a commoner. I also have a poor title—a doctor's degree—but it was gained by much toil and study ; now I love it, and I like to hear it."

She answered not a word ; her pride had not entirely turned into love under the burning sway of Eros ; he might do as he pleased in future, she would make him no more advances, he did not wish for them ; she would call him nothing but Dr Campbell as long as she lived ; it was scarcely possible he loved her, but she would breathe neither suspicion nor complaint to any one ; she certainly brought about the whole business herself, for it was her father's encouragement, no doubt, that made him speak, if he had spoken ; she did not know what had actually happened in that interview in the parlour before she was led in ; perhaps he would love her when they were married ; if she thought he would not, she would renounce him immediately and lose her life at the same time.

When Dr Campbell returned home in the afternoons after his daily labours, there was one thought that haunted him with peculiar bitterness. He had told Miss Neville, solemnly, that he intended never to marry, and now what would she think of him? It was an irremediable case, for he could not set her right without revealing the manner in which Lord Northwood had ensnared him, and this he would never do. He must continue to appear in the eyes of Miss Neville a liar and a coward ; afraid to confess an honourable attachment,—for, of course, Miss Neville would never imagine that so short a time ago as the night of her ball, he had no partiality for Lady Caroline, no hope of becoming her husband. He must still appear what he was not, and suffer for

it. Well, he had done very wrong once in his life, and perhaps the penalty was, that he was to appear to be doing wrong ever after, no matter in how upright a manner he might conduct himself. Cassandra, once faithless to her promise, was never to be believed again; there was a deep truth in those Greek fables. He became much depressed by these and other reflections; he found it hard to appear cheerful to the affectionate Lord Northwood; to Lady Caroline he endeavoured to be more kind, but as to show love where he did not feel it, he could not—would not do that.

Such were the dark mists that hung over what ought to be the bright breaking of a vermillion dawn, the pure promise of a serene future, where love seemed to flourish in its pristine vigour without the slightest view towards pecuniary or other low interests. It was hard to tell whether the Northwood family or Dr Campbell were most conspicuous in scorning all that the multitude esteems precious and desirable: they despised position, titles, estates in courting him; he, in yielding to their solicitations, flung back as worthless, into their lap, the wealth which they so lavishly offered him.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HEIRESS ONLY A WOMAN.

*"Et je lui ferai voir bientôt après la fête
Qu'une femme a toujours une vengeance prête."*—MOLIÈRE.

MISS NEVILLE in the mean time was beginning to recover, and was able to drive about her place in the pony-chaise. But she still sat entirely in her own apartment above-stairs; she said she was not strong enough to talk to visitors, and showed no disposition to return to the world. She made no inquiries about any one, and did not seem to take any interest in her tenantry, or the poor families about her who had formerly interested her so much. She occasionally made Miss Cope read some devotional book aloud for her. Maria found it necessary to give Mrs Neville a hint of the probable cause of her illness, and the

three ladies unanimously agreed never to mention Campbell's name again in her presence. Consequently she was in perfect ignorance of his approaching marriage.

Things being in this state, she was sitting in her dressing-room one morning, and her sister with her, when Sabina entered the apartment with her face brim-full of some intelligence.

She addressed herself to Maria in the language which that young lady had enjoined.

"Eh! Mademoiselle, qu'en pensez-vous? Monsieur le docteur va se marier! que cela est drôle! et la fiancée—ma première petite maitresse!"

She was instantly cut short by Maria.

"How dare you come bursting into the room, disturbing Miss Neville? I don't know what nonsense you are talking; Dr Strong was married long ago and has two children. Go down-stairs directly, and do not open your lips in future until we speak first."

Sabina, much crest-fallen, hurried away. Maria stole a glance at her sister, anxious to discover whether she had guessed the truth. Miss Neville's face, set between the snowy frills of her dressing-gown beneath, and the rich borders of her morning cap above, might have vied with either in whiteness. She said nothing, but drew a book towards her, and bent over it with her forehead on her hand. She remained thus for a quarter of an hour, turning over no leaf. At last Maria said:

"Alicia dear, will you not dress yourself and take a little drive about the place?"

"I don't know—I am not sure—not to-day I believe. Are not you and mamma going to see Mrs Smyth, or the Bradfords, or somebody?"

"Yes, but we would go with more comfort if you had your airing first."

"But I don't want to drive out to-day; I wish you would go, and not mind me; I should get well faster if I was not so watched; pray order the carriage and pay your visits, and I will get Letty Cope to read to me while you are out."

Maria felt pretty easy about her now; if she did guess who "Monsieur le docteur" was, she seemed to be bearing it quietly enough. In about an hour after, Mrs Neville and her youngest daughter drove off on their excursion.

As soon as they were gone Miss Neville desired her waiting-maid to send Sabina to her. The little Swiss arrived without delay.

"Who is that doctor who you said just now was going to be married?" asked her mistress.

"Ah, milady, Dr Camele, to be sure. I knew well, I, that it was not Dr Strong, but Ma'nselle Marie was so *fachée* that I dared not say another word."

"And to whom is he going to be married?" pursued Miss Neville, with terrible calmness.

"Oh, to my mistress who brought me from Paris, and then sent me away—Lady Caroline Fitzarthur."

"Who told you this?"

Sabina blushed, and began to stammer.

"Sabina, you are not telling the truth. This is some made-up nonsense!" cried Miss Neville, with a strange ray of joy struggling through the displeasure that she meant to throw into her face.

"Oh, indeed, milady, it is quite true, very true. But he did not come by my invite; I bid him come no more."

"Who is he?" cried Miss Neville, with flashing eyes.

"The Northword gardener, milady. He had the impudence to come to see me, and I walked up and down the cedar avenue with him for ten minutes; but he comes no more. Oh, I was so enraged!"

"Well, no matter; that is, I mean, of course he has no business to come here to visit my servants, and I hope I may never hear of his coming again."

"Never, never, milady."

"And what is this gossip he told you?"

"Quite true, indeed; milady Caroline is going to marry her doctor. *Bah! le vilain!* But he is too good for her; yes he is."

"Are you sure 'tis true?"

"Oh, *vraiment oui!*" exclaimed Sabina, thinking her own tongue might be more emphatic, and carry conviction. "The doctor is there every day, sitting in the drawing-room alone with her; and the—the—law gentleman from London is come, and he is writing out marriage papers; and the servants are preparing for the wedding (but there is no one there now who can make the right *confitures*); and milady Caroline herself desired the gardener (*mauvais sujet!* he shall come here no more!), but she desired him pull no flowers for three weeks, as they are scarce now,—but at the end of that time they would be all wanted, all wanted!"

Miss Neville lay back in her chair, and summoned up all her

newly-returned strength to stand by her in this emergency. She would *not* faint; the o'ermastering will should conquer every feeble regret. He had mocked her, insulted her; he was laughing in his sleeve the night he told her "he would never marry any one on earth." His heart was linked that very moment to this Earl's silken daughter. Why not confess the truth? Would she have blamed him because another suited his taste better than she did? Why not say honestly his affections were pre-engaged?—Because he took a fiendish delight in jesting with her earnest, her pure attachment, and in deceiving her, until the full truth bursting on her might scorch her to ashes, while some demon would be whispering all the time in her ear, "You are thus rewarded for flinging your heart to one who had taken the liberty of pleasing himself, and was already in his anticipated Elysium when you crept up to him, and placed yourself and your all at his disposal."

During the silence that prevailed Sabina also seemed plunged in her reflections. Then she muttered to herself:

"Happy? she will not be happy; she cannot; there is a crime in the family, a curse hanging over it, long, long years; and it will fall at last;—and now—why not now? The Vengeances" (meaning, we suppose, the Eumenides) "will not wait for ever, and she may pay for Adela and herself at the same time; for she is *une ingrate*, so it would not be unjust, after all—"

Miss Neville interrupted her:—

"What do you mean by these rambling, unintelligible words?"

Sabina hesitated, but Miss Neville insisted on her explaining herself.

She then informed her that there was a wild legend afloat about Lord Northwood's ancestors; that the old people in the neighbourhood spoke of it sometimes; but that she had the advantage of hearing Lady Caroline herself relate the whole story to her friend Miss Bolton. They did not think she was minding but she did not lose a word; indeed, Caroline and Sarah "did not think" on the subject, not having the slightest idea that Sabina was lurking at the outside of Anthony's cell, listening to the exciting narration which the reader must remember was given by Caroline to Sarah beside the couch of the petrified monk.

Miss Neville listened attentively, and when it was finished, she said:—

"This is a curious story, but of course I do not believe it; it must be all lies."

"Not all lies," said Sabina, shaking her head; "the sin is quite true; 'tis written in a book in the library at Northwood. I read it one day when they were all out" (in a confidential tone). "But you do not believe the monk was turned to stone;—well, I don't know. . . . Oh, if you saw him, milady! he is very pretty. . . . He is to disappear from that bed when Lady Adela's sin is wiped away."

Then she began to laugh at a conceit that had apparently just come into her head.

"Ha, ha! he would be good enough husband for Lady Caroline; her heart is as cold and hard as he is. She never even said, 'Good-bye, my poor Sabina!' The doctor is too warm, and sweet, and handsome for her."

"Hold your tongue!" cried Miss Neville, shuddering; "you may go down."

Sabina withdrew, well pleased that she had got off with such a trifling reprimand for having permitted a visit from her admirer. In her animated eagerness to communicate her news, she never anticipated the likelihood of being questioned upon the source of her information.

When Sabina was gone Miss Neville began to walk about the room. She could not sit down; she seemed to be growing stronger every moment. Every feeling towards Campbell, except a desire to punish him for his treachery, as she denominated it, had apparently vanished from her bosom.

"He rejected me, with my strong heart and my large mind, and preferred that feeble fool—*eau sucrée*! a spoiled child; a thing all made up of whims, and fancies, and bubbles; living on posset and petting." (Sabina had occasionally dropped hints that gave her some insight into the character of her rival.) "She make him happy! she cannot; he knows she cannot; he is deceived; there is something wrong; he shall not be sacrificed to her,—he must be saved—she shall never marry him, the little wretch!"

So rapid were her changes, she hated him, pitied him, was willing to rescue him, all nearly in the same minute. Then her thoughts took a new direction, and she settled that he was willing to sacrifice rational domestic happiness for the sake of rank, and distinction, and riches. What right had she to form such a

high opinion of him? he was no better than other people. Forsooth he was won't to talk slightly of wealth, and it was easy for him, when he was engaged probably to a lady of enormous wealth! no doubt his whole course of action since she had become acquainted with him had been one of art, trickery, and insult. And he had crowned it all in the grapery that night by treating her like a little child. Yes, she must not be told the worst,—it would kill the poor creature, adoring him as she did. As we say to the miserable infant, deprived by death of its mother, "Mamma is gone on a journey; she will be back after some time;" so he was too tender to confess the horrid truth that he was preparing to confer on another the felicity he had refused to her.

Stung to madness she rang, and bid her maid order her little carriage, and then dress her. She would drive furiously about the avenues; this tremendous charge of electricity must be let off in some way. It was wonderful how strong she felt; this excitement, racking as it was, made her sensible that she was nearly restored to health. A few hours ago depressed, objectless, crushed, she was prepared to mope as an invalid for an indefinite length of time; but now a rush from without had set all the elements of which she was composed in play: the machinery was wound up, and ready for action; the mercury was rising; the flame was shooting upwards, and seizing upon every combustible within its reach; and, be it for evil or for good, the waters were overflowing their bounds,—who could tell whether to produce luxuriant vegetation or sweep away in their torrent all the living forms that lay in their fatal path?

She got into her pony-chaise, and directed the servant to drive very fast along the irrigation walk. She revolved in her mind vague thoughts of vengeance for the contemptuous slight that had been put on her by him whom she once—ay, and now too—admired, loved, adored. She—the baby whom he had cleverly slipped away from without letting her scream—she would show him what she could do when she was terrible, as well as all that she could promise when she was kind. Yes; if skill could devise, if wealth could bribe, if the will of a spurned, furious woman, could pierce through difficulties to reach the object for which she panted,—he should never become possessed of his waxen, bedizened doll—they should never occupy the same nuptial couch; the very thought was hell fire!

As she thundered along she nearly ran over Miss Cope, who

was walking quietly before her. She stopped the vehicle. Poor Miss Cope looked terrified and amazed.

"Letty Cope, where in the name of pity have you been hiding all day? I am alone this hour; why do you go out without asking whether one wants you?"

She spoke loud and strong; her eyes were flashing, and she had a bright colour.

Miss Cope was seriously alarmed. She was almost certain she had been attacked with insanity. She did not answer her, but said to the servant:—

"Is it with Miss Neville's permission that you are driving in this violent manner?"

"To be sure it is!" shouted Miss Neville; "I should like to see any one whirling me along against my will, if it were to the gates of Paradise! Come into the chaise directly."

Miss Cope obeyed in silence and dread. There was not a word uttered for the present by either lady, owing to the nearness of the servant. So the restraint she was forced to lay on herself quieted Miss Neville somewhat, and reassured Miss Cope a little respecting the aberration of her intellects, though she still felt amazed at the air of indignant defiance that every feature wore, so perfectly opposite to the inanimate, listless, absent look with which she had that morning received her chocolate from the hands of her obsequious friend. When they arrived at the end of the walk where the water tumbled down, and produced, as we before mentioned, a little cascade, Miss Neville ordered the man to stop.

"We will get out here," said she to Miss Cope, "and go down to the seat opposite the waterfall, and sit there awhile."

Her companion remonstrated.

"You have not sat in the open air since your illness; might you not get cold?"

"It is a beautiful soft day, and I know best myself what I can bear. Come, come!"

She sent away the chaise, desiring it to return in half an hour. They descended the winding path, and seated themselves on the bench, a large cloak being first placed on it by Miss Cope, and wrapped round her friend's limbs. After this service she was commencing a speech in praise of the waterfall, the rock, the ferns, the autumn tints, the autumn calm, the robin's note, and

heaven knows what besides. But her impetuous patroness cut her short at the very commencement of her eloquence.

"Hush, hush ! I did not come here to listen to fine speeches. Letty Cope, he is going to be married !"

"O mercy ! we were endeavouring— How did you hear it ?"

"No matter, I know it. You have heard it, too, I suppose."

"Yes."

"It is perfectly true, is it not ?" gasped Miss Neville.

"Indeed, it must be so, for Mr Routledge told us that the doctor acknowledged it to him."

This was the last shock. The testimony of servants might admit of some doubt, but Mr Routledge's information came from head quarters. She got an odd choking in her throat ; her stomach felt sick, and her arteries appeared somehow to be turning into leaden pipes. But the iron will rose fierce and dominant over all ; the demon that clutched at her throat was routed ; her blood was triumphantly dashed from her heart, and flowed once more through elastic and propelling canals. She never looked so full of life as when Miss Cope ventured to turn her eyes upon her. But even that lady could perceive it was not a look quite suited to allay all uneasiness on the part of a friend.

"My dear Miss Neville, is it not just the same what he does now ? he could never have come here again."

"It is *not* the same, Letty Cope ! it is *not* all the same that he mocked me, sported insolently with my feelings,—told me a lie ! You are aware what his last words were."

"Perhaps he then meant what he said ; he might have been caught afterwards," argued Miss Cope.

"'Caught afterwards !' oh, what a deep soul you have ! Traitor, deceiver though he be, I am not quite so hard on him as you are. He is not such an utter chaff-like thing as that ! To warm into an attachment, to effect an engagement, to accomplish a marriage, all in a few weeks, four or five of which, as I have been told, were spent out of this country ! He is not so utterly light and unfeeling. He knows the lady this some time, and on that night he certainly had serious feelings with regard to her."

"And would you," asked Miss Cope, with somewhat better insight into the human heart than she had hitherto shown,—

"would you indeed have thanked him more if he had then told you that he loved another, and preferred her to you?"

Miss Neville coloured a little, but drew herself up indignantly:—

"I should have thanked him,—yes, I should have thanked him for telling me the truth, be it what it might, for that would have shown at least that he respected me—that he thought me a reasonable being."

She paused for a moment. Miss Cope might well secretly question (though we don't say she did) whether this burning wrath was wholly grounded on his having simply told her a falsehood; if he had excused himself by saying he was bent on emigrating to Australia, for example, and then changed his mind, and merely remained at home, would it have sent this sword through her heart? Was it not the noble young bride beckoning him to bliss that was rending her with all the furies of jealousy? She burst forth suddenly:—

"Letty Cope! he shall never marry her!"

"Oh, my dear friend! you had such a regard for him lately,—and now you would wish to blast his happiness."

"*Regard* for him! Letty Cope, I will crush you where you stand! *Regard!* would it were only that feeling that I had ever experienced towards him! You talk very tenderly of his happiness, too;—happiness with another! I suppose I had better write to congratulate him, ay, and send some graceful present to the bride! Well,—yes:—ha! ha! there would be some sense in that, provided it was the imperial robe of Medea. I have read more than he thinks;—he need not send me to Lemprière as he sent me to Robertson and Paley. How anxious he was about my education!"

Miss Cope grew uneasy.

"Do come back to the house; I am terrified lest you get cold."

"Let me alone; return yourself to the iceberg where you were born."

She turned away, and seeming to forget Miss Cope's presence, began a kind of soliloquy.

"The cold in clime are cold in blood,
Their love can scarce deserve the name;
But mine was like the lava flood
That boils in Ætna's breast of flame."

Oh Heavens! How well I remember the day he read those lines to me! He uttered every word with such deep feeling, but perfect simplicity, too, as if there was no one listening to him; but my whole soul was shaken. . . . Ah! the lava that runs through my blood is of a more intense, unchangeable nature than that which streams from *Ætna* and *Vesuvius*. Yes, forsooth, the mountain's liquid mass is very terrible to-day, but to-morrow it is cool and dry, and is soon smoothed, and carved into ornaments for a lady's bosom. But the furnace that glows within my heart,—it may change its character, indeed, but will not be a whit the less scorching;—it was love,—be it so,—but it is now vengeance!"

She turned about and saw Miss Cope still standing near her.

"Did I not tell you to go away? Why are you there still? Go and send the chaise for me."

Miss Cope began to ascend the pathway. Miss Neville, exhausted, leant back, and watched the spray of the waterfall as it danced about in all directions, while the sun shone, the robins sang, and the swallows dipped, rose, and slanted along in their beautiful exercise, and the carol of some peasant girls was heard at a distance. She murmured:—

"Everything is gay, every one happy, and I am miserable, mad; none to advise, none to help me."

"Every one is not happy, lady, for you see one before you as wretched as yourself; you want no advice, for your own wisdom is all-sufficient for you, but you may want help; you are delicate, feeble, injured; there stands one here who, wronged grievously by the same traitor, is ready to lay down his life in avenging you and himself."

Such were the words she suddenly heard, and looking up amazed she saw the Indian standing erect opposite to her, in full Eastern costume. She made a slight exclamation of terror, and was going to escape up the pathway, but he detained her.

"Stay! the hour of vengeance is arrived; it can be put off no longer; you have been insulted by the same man who has crushed, bruised, mangled me. I heard all that you have been saying;—call me not a listener;—there are powers at work that smile at our puny notions of honour; a great Providence has brought us into communication with one another; sit down and attend to me."

She sat down, and they had a long conversation together.

After it was ended she promised to meet him again at the waterfall in a few days. She then ascended the hill and found her conveyance had been some time waiting for her. She returned to the house. Her mother was astonished and much alarmed at the great exertions she had been making, but her daughter assured her she felt much better for what she had done. Mrs Neville then ventured to inform her, with much satisfaction, that Lord Olford had remained at Major Smyth's in a state of the greatest anxiety, until she was out of danger; he had then returned to London, but was expected soon again; Mrs Neville concluded with a significant nod. Her daughter did not take the slightest notice of this important information, but retired to her dressing-room, where she continued to remain, refusing to see visitors of any kind.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PROPHETESS.

"She waxes desperate with imagination."—SHAKESPEARE.

"God bless my ladies! are they all in love?"—SHAKESPEARE.

MEANTIME preparations for the marriage were going on at the Abbey. They were such as became the rank of the bride of course, but by no means on an extensive scale, for the wedding was to be very quiet and private, owing to her Ladyship's state of health, which, though improving, was quite unequal to a public display. And other motives might have operated too, albeit, perhaps, scarcely acknowledged by those whom they influenced. It was not surprising if Lord Northwood hailed any plausible pretence for not gathering a circle of noble friends around him to witness the union of his daughter with a country physician. He was probably very glad to pay Campbell the compliment of leaving him to choose what clergyman should perform the ceremony. He was not at all inclined to write to his cousin the Bishop of —, requesting he would come to Northwood Abbey to make his daughter happy, and promising him the "assistance" of the Honourable and Reverend So and So, concluding with the

announcement that the bridegroom was a *dispensary doctor*. Campbell named his friend Davenport; the Earl was sorry it was not Mr Purdon; but, after having given him his choice, it would be unfair to object to it; he only said that Mr Purdon must be invited to the wedding, as he was rector of the parish,—and—might he not assist? But Campbell refused, in such a vehement manner, that Lord Northwood suspected they must have had a quarrel, and gave up the point. Campbell was then asked whether he had any particular friends in the neighbourhood whom he wished to invite, on which he mentioned the Routledges; and, accordingly, Lady Caroline drove to Holly Park and left her card, and an invitation was subsequently sent, the two young ladies being requested to act as bridesmaids. The Boltons were all engaged: even George, who had gone to St John's College, Cambridge, only a few weeks before, was to return for two days, in order to be present at the important event; Sarah and Lucy were, with the Miss Routledges, to make up four bridesmaids; Lady Caroline would not have any more, and she entreated of her papa to ask as few guests as possible, as she was quite unequal to company. The Earl assured her he would not add any to the number already named, but there was one thing he thought would be decorous, namely, that there should be some married lady staying in the house at the time, to act as matron to the bride. His youngest sister, residing chiefly in London, was the person whom he proposed inviting. Lady Caroline could not make any objection, so the Earl wrote to his sister, announcing the approaching event, and requesting that she and her husband would oblige him by their company on the occasion. Of course there was a candid acknowledgment made of the bridegroom's profession, and the total absence of worldly wealth on his part.

Lady Anne, the sister in question, had been long married to a wealthy Irish baronet, of very old creation, Sir Thomas Ffolliott; she was a woman of ordinary type, made up of that accumulation of negative qualities, which, when aggregated, obtain weight enough to form a "good kind of woman." She was *not* ill-tempered, she was *not* ill-natured, she was *not* a gossip, or retailer of scandal; she was neither dissipated, nor a flirt, nor a scold. To do her justice too, she had the positive quality of being very ready to perform a kind act, and was much attached to her relatives, and very anxious that they should keep up the dignity of their birth. She had chaperoned Lady Caroline on her introduc-

tion into society, and had behaved kindly and discreetly on the occasion.

Sir Thomas was an honest, sensible man, with a little touch of humour and sarcasm in his composition ; he had a proper amount of self-respect, which never deviated into vanity or conceit ; and that candid estimation of others, which prevented him from thinking that a man's profession or his poverty constituted his essence, but were rather accidents, from which he might actually shine out unsullied.

As soon as Lady Anne read Lord Northwood's letter, she hastened to find her husband, who was sitting in his parlour.

"Well, Ffolliott, this is a most extraordinary thing :—exactly what I said long ago has come to pass ;—my brother is going to marry his only daughter to a chemist,—no, a physician, I mean."

"Very different things, my dear."

"I'm not so sure of that ; one is just as great a disgrace to our family as the other ; and, after all, is it not much the same to order the bottles and to mix them ? But I don't want to discuss it ; Northwood says he is a physician, and we may thank Heaven it is not the plough-boy she has fancied."

"I did not know she had shown propensities in that direction," said Sir Thomas.

"I don't say she did ; but whoever she fancied, he would have consented, so it might have been worse. Don't you remember, Ffolliott, what I said to my brother in this very room ?—it was a perfect prophecy."

"I confess I do not, my dear ; you say so many good things, and the last is always so much the best, it puts all the others out of my head."

"It would have only one to put out of your head, if you reason correctly. But I cannot agree with you ; for what I said that time was the wisest thing I ever uttered. It was when he came here to have a consultation on his wife, and the two children were with them,—the most troublesome creatures in existence ! They discovered some new pleasure every day, which must be directly procured."

"Well, then, they were more fortunate than Xerxes himself, that is all I can say."

"Ho ! you are pleased to be very humorous ; if our Marcus marries a soubrette in Paris, I hope it will put you into as good spirits. But, as I was saying, the door was beset with porters

bringing home all sorts of playthings, and fantastic hats and caps, and belts, and sashes, and follies, and the house was in a din all day with musical cars, and trumpets, and toy-fiddles. So, at last, I said (I am amazed, Ffolliott, you do not remember) :— ‘ Well, Northwood, you have plenty of money, and this rubbish is harmless, but is it possible you do not see the evil of such over-indulgence ? And you will produce such a habit in yourself of granting every desire, that I am persuaded, when they begin to think of serious things, should Caroline express her strong sense of the merits of the footman, and should Freddy declare that his happiness depends on the consent of his sister’s dressmaker,—you will directly begin to prepare settlements, and order equipages, and fix allowances, and look for suitable mansions in town for the young couples.’ Did you ever see anything in your life turn out so true ? ”

She ended with a serious, steady look at Sir Thomas, which evidently demanded new homage, superior to any he had before granted her. In fact, she was so elated at having her merits as a true prophet established, that she was excited, rather than mortified, by this degrading step her relatives were going to take, and was perfectly willing to forgive the process by which she had been raised to her important eminence.

“ Well, I suppose you do not intend to go down to the wedding ? ” said Sir Thomas.

“ I think I will. I have no business to be angry, if her father is not displeased ; and, since the poor thing has no mother, it would be unkind to refuse ;—and as the man passes for a gentleman,—and as Marcus is not here, I will go. Indeed, I should not like my son to be made familiar with such doings.”

“ I should not say his being present at that wedding would increase the chances of his falling in love with a lady in the middle classes, rather than in the higher,” observed Sir Thomas.

“ Oh ! I suppose not,” said Lady Anne, rather peevishly ; “ and perhaps, indeed, the exhibition might be a warning to him. Their intended has a Scotch name too,—from the Highlands probably, and horribly vulgar ; squat, high cheek-bones, and a fiery red face ;—I never met a Scotchman who had not a red face ; and such an accent ! I shan’t understand a word he says, and he will think it pride, or conceit, or something,—those kind of people are so suspicious.”

“ You had better spend a week before you go in getting up

the glossary to Burns's poems, and it will be of all the use in the world to you," said her husband.

"You may be sarcastic if you choose, Sir Thomas; but if he is disgusting at dinner the first day, I promise you I will dine early in the breakfast parlour the next."

"Disgusting!" repeated the baronet, looking up from his newspaper, over his spectacles at her.

"I am sure, I never in my life dined at the table with a physician," she cried; "and I do not know what they are; I did not mean to imply that they did not behave well in general,—but there is a combination of circumstances here;—she, very delicate,—he, her doctor, and her adoring lover besides; I suppose it will be every moment, 'Caroline, don't eat that!—Caroline, this is the only thing fit for you;—one glass of sherry,—that's all; what! salad! raw vegetables will kill you!' and all in the Scotch accent!"

"Anne," cried the baronet, at last provoked, "do not make such an egregious fool of yourself; if you mean this for satire, it is extremely dull. You have a strange opinion of your niece's taste; the very fact of her falling in love with this young man, who has no worldly advantages, would lead me to suppose that his personal endowments must be of a very high order."

"Very well, we shall see," said Lady Anne, a little subdued, and she then bustled off to answer her brother's letter, and prepare for the important business of ordering Caroline's *trousseau*, with which commission she had been intrusted.

Lady Caroline, having received a kind message from her aunt, saying that she would attend at the time appointed and be of any use she could to her, began to prepare to receive her with all due honours. The handsomest spare room in the house was aired and got ready for Sir Thomas and Lady Anne. There was also a bedroom to be fitted up for Caroline herself, as the one she now occupied was not convenient nor large enough for a married couple. It may seem surprising that she selected one of the two apartments over which the events in the history of Anthony and Adela had thrown such a horror and a mystery. The upper room was that called the "Monk's Room" (where he had first discovered who the disguised novice was), and here it was that the fire occurred on the night of the arrival, and hither Caroline was not inclined to return; besides it was now called "Miss Bolton's Room," and was always in readiness to receive her when she could be prevailed on

to visit the Abbey. The lower room was that in which Adela was supposed to have been killed or buried alive, and this Caroline fixed on for herself, and it was immediately furnished with every luxury and elegance. In her daily drives she was fond of calling at Laburnum Lodge, and talking over her little plans to Sarah. Immediately on receiving her aunt's answer, she went thither and informed her friend of the expected addition to their party. She then described the fittings and decorations of the apartment designed for herself. Sarah approved highly of the taste evidently displayed, but expressed her astonishment that Caroline had chosen this chamber.

"I thought you had a horror of it," she exclaimed; "and, in itself, too, it is very disagreeable, on the ground-floor, and looking into the yard; a noisy place in the morning, and so public!"

"Oh, but there are shutters, and blinds, and curtains, and everything," answered Caroline, "and I will tell you the reason I chose it. I am really growing ashamed of the manner in which I brooded over that legend, and actually half believed it. Those dark memories that hang over this house must be dissipated now; it is quite time they should. Why should superstition, that is nearly banished from our enlightened land, still stretch its gloomy arm over the home of the Northwoods? I have taken upon me to put an end to its reign, and I think I cannot do it more effectually than by choosing either of those rooms to make a prominent figure in one of the auspicious events that is to befall the family. If I begin a happy life in that supposed scene of anguish, I give the place a new character, and abolish its ancient one; it will no longer be spoken of as the chamber where the Lady Adela suffered, but as the bridal apartment of the Lady Caroline; and so all that old story will be gradually forgotten."

Sarah thought she reasoned well, but still, somehow, she did not like the room for her, and wondered how she could bear to select it for a nuptial chamber.

"Well, Caroline, I am glad you have got over all your nervous feelings about that part of the house; but I suppose you will not understand fear, with your protector at hand."

"Come, now, do not joke me; you promised you never would. And indeed he is very dull, he says scarcely a word; papa assures me it is natural—that he is grieving after all the old friends whom he is to attend no more. There is always something sorrowful in a marriage; though you gain one beloved object, you surrender

others. Indeed I am peculiarly blest ; I am to give up no one, but still to have my dear papa with me, and I should be the happiest creature in the world if *he* was a little more cheerful and—friendly ; but I think he will be a different being when it is all over, and we are quietly at St Leonards-on-Sea, where we are to pass a short time.”

“Do you go on the wedding day ?” asked Sarah.

“No, no ; I should not be equal to beginning a journey after the ceremony, and the *déjeuner*, and all that agitation and fatigue. I am to rest until the next day, and then we go. And do not forget, Sarah, you are to come to me the day before my marriage, and your brothers and Lucy the next morning.” Sarah promised, and they parted.

A few days before that fixed for the interesting event, Sir Thomas and Lady Anne Ffolliott arrived at the Abbey, and were most kindly received by the amiable Earl. When they were sitting in their private apartments, previous to dressing, Lady Anne said :—

“I have been promised a sight of the lover at dinner ; they are evidently nervous at the thoughts of exhibiting him ; poor Caroline looks very pale and agitated : of course she is sensible how I shall feel and think when I see a person falling so far short, most probably, of what her husband ought to be.”

Sir Thomas answered :—

“Do, my dear, take care and don’t scream when you first see him,—it would be so ungracious towards poor Northwood, after the warm reception he has given us.”

Lady Anne opened her eyes wide, and looked aghast.

“Scream ! bless my soul, Ffolliott, what do you mean ? Is it such a desperate case ? You have got a glimpse of him—have you not ?—in some of the rooms below : now cannot you tell me the worst at once ?”

Sir Thomas began to laugh, and said :—

“I must plead guilty to having given Gordon a crown for permitting me to peep at him through the grating, before he was led out to the company in general.”

“Positively, Sir Thomas, it is a burning shame. There he is, no doubt, a horrible hunchback, or something worse, and you are only laughing, and keeping me in the dark, that I may be quite unprepared ; and then, indeed, I’m not to scream ! I will ring

for Fitzarthur to be sent to me, and I will get him to tell me the simple truth."

"And so you think Caroline fell in love with a deformed doctor of medicine, without a perch of land, or a penny in his pocket."

"I'm sure I don't know what I think, but altogether I am quite nervous. I wish I had not come here. If you once put your foot into a business that is not all right, you cannot tell for what you are committing yourself."

"Just so," answered the baronet; "we had braced ourselves up to see a physician, and now there are serious apprehensions that we may see a hunchback also."

"Be kind enough to tell me, Sir Thomas, whether you have seen him or not, that I may know which I am to put on—my *moiré antique* or my nightcap; for if I get no satisfaction on the subject I will go to bed."

"I never laid eyes on him, my dear."

"And why did you lead me to think he was a monster?"

"You owe that conception to your own lively imagination. I warned you to use a little self-command, for the trepidation you were in certainly called for such a caution."

Lady Anne, after a little more grumbling at those she had seen, and those she had not seen, and those who were "bent on plaguing her," dressed, and went down-stairs. Lord Northwood, Lady Caroline, and Dr Campbell, were all in the drawing-room. The last was sitting in his favourite place, the end window, opposite to the drawing-room door. He was accordingly the first person who met Lady Anne's eye when she entered.

She started a little, for the Earl had expressly told her there was not to be any one to dinner except his future son-in-law. However, she had no objection, though a little fatigued, that an exception should be made in favour of such an extremely nice-looking person; she was glad something besides a vulgar, squat Scotchman could be obtained in that country.

The Earl hastened to meet her.

"Ha, my dear Anne! looking as fresh and bright as if you had not travelled a mile. Allow me to present Dr Campbell to you."

Campbell rose, and approached her ladyship with all his native ease and gentleness.

If she admired him in repose, his graceful movements, and

the illumination that lights up a face on an introduction or a greeting, made him look doubly charming. Sir Thomas's sarcastic warning, "not to scream," was not so ill-timed, for she certainly found it hard to suppress her surprise and delight, to which was added a sense of the ludicrous on contrasting his appearance with her preconceived notions of him.

The introduction being over, Campbell sat down by her, and began to converse in a light, easy manner in his unrivalled tones. Lady Caroline, who had perceived that her aunt was previously a little out of sorts, now watched her countenance, and was much gratified to see her admiration breaking more strongly every moment through the mists of her face, like the sun rising through a summer fog. Lady Anne had lived many years in high circles, but she certainly had seldom, if ever, met with such a man as this; for he was one of those rare beings whom nature and art (we use the latter term in its very best sense), in a strange and momentary fit of friendship, agree together to endow with their choicest gifts.

When Sir Thomas came into the room he was amazed to find his lately troublesome and much agitated wife sitting perfectly calmed, or rather moving in the gentlest undulations beneath the lulling and entrancing influences of the very ogre who, it had been anticipated, was to lash her into convulsions. But the expected Æolus had been converted into the Neptune of the hour:—

Dicto citius tumida æquora placat,

Collectasque fugat nubes, solemque reducit.

The Earl made Campbell sit by Lady Anne at dinner, "that they might get acquainted." The baronet sat by Caroline, and took all proper care of her, and was far from being a dull companion. He had a very happy art of telling stories, and had that frank, affable, unstudied manner which is so pleasing in an Irishman when it is, as in this case, accompanied by perfect good-breeding. Caroline ate scarcely a morsel at dinner, and Campbell so far from being "disgusting," took not the least notice of her, till at last Lady Anne herself observed to him that her poor niece had totally lost her appetite, on which he informed her that the young lady had already dined at one o'clock. Lady Anne wondered he did not say a word of any kind to his intended bride, though it must be across the table,—but he totally ignored her presence.

When the ladies arrived in the drawing-room, Lady Anne

broke into raptures with her future nephew. After a volley of admiration she ended with :—

“ Caroline, what made your papa ever tell me he was a physician ? ”

“ But indeed he is, aunt.”

“ No such thing, my child ; or, at least, he is only pretending to be one. He is a prince in disguise. I have discovered the secret ! he wishes you to choose him entirely for his own sake, and he is concealing his rank for the present, but will break forth in all his glory after the ceremony next Tuesday. Then you will discover you are the Princess of Hesse-something ; only, indeed, he is superior to any German I ever met. But he is some one very great, certainly ; and I am almost ashamed to take you upstairs to look at your wedding dress, it is not near grand enough for a princess.”

She then playfully led her off, and the rest of their time, until the gentlemen rejoined them, was spent in the interesting occupation of inspecting the bridal attire.

After tea Campbell gratified Lord Northwood by singing for Lady Anne, while Caroline played, and his manner of performing his part produced new raptures in the elder lady. And thus ended an evening which, dull as it may appear, was the happiest that some, at least, of the party were ever to see.

When they had all retired to their apartments, Lady Anne, who was fatigued, undressed more quickly than usual, and was some time in bed when Sir Thomas gently opened the door, and entered in his dressing-gown and slippers.

“ Are you asleep, my dear ? ”

“ I am not. I have told you fifty times I can never go to sleep when I am expecting you : first the flare of the candle ; then you come plump into bed with such weight ! there is a shock of an earthquake every night. How easy it would be to go to sleep expecting all that ! Northwood was noticing how fat you are grown.”

“ Well, no wonder the poppies should be sent flying by such an invasion. I am rather surprised, though, that Northwood noticed my fat, for I was in hopes I looked as lithe as Mercury near that horrible hunchback who is going to be married to Caroline. My dear, you seem to have studied the glossary with great success ; you understood every word of that thickset, ugly-faced Scotchman’s dialect.”

"Oh yes! I knew very well you would come out with something of this kind. But really it is not fair to expect one will know just what a man is before one sees him."

"But you are a prophetess," reasoned the baronet.

"I may make a shrewd guess at the future, but I never set up for clairvoyance," said Lady Anne, pettishly. Much as she admired Campbell she did not relish this utter defeat that she had sustained on the question of his appearance and manners, so she resolved to assail him on other grounds.

"As I am a prophet I will venture to foretell another little matter. I should say she will not be happy: he does not seem much in love with her; he did not say a word to her at dinner; at tea, one or two commonplace things; and at the piano, nothing but 'you are playing too fast.' Is not that astonishing?"

"So you won't dine in the breakfast-room to-morrow."

"Sir Thomas, you are very unfeeling. I know I am seriously uneasy about my niece's future prospects, and I do not think Fitzarthur is well satisfied by any means: he has not a word to say,—I never saw him so downcast."

"He talked very fairly after the ladies left the room," said Sir Thomas; "and as to Dr Campbell, he passed with the utmost ease from one topic to another, and was perfect master of all."

"Oh, I am well aware," answered Lady Anne, "that if a man has a spark of spirits left in his composition, he will cherish it up until he gets rid of the ladies. I wish you could do without us entirely; it would be a great relief to both parties. As to the doctor, I give him full credit for being most fascinating and accomplished; but I wish I could see a little more devotion to the object of his choice. Really, an impartial observer would have said that of the two he was most in love with myself."

In saying these words she smiled, and gave a little roll of her head on the pillow, which would have been a toss had she been at the time in the perpendicular position.

"Ho, ho! is that the case? I must look sharp after this Lothario. A decided admiration on both sides already! My own interests and those of my niece are deeply involved."

So saying, the facetious baronet put the extinguisher on the candle.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BRIDAL EVE.

“ And o’er her spirit there came a feeling of wonder and sadness,
Strange forebodings of ill, unseen, and that cannot be compass’d;
And as at the tramp of a horse’s foot on the turf of the prairies,
Far in advance are closed the leaves of the shrinking mimosa,
So at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad forebodings of evil,
Shrinks and closes the heart ere the stroke of doom has attain’d it.”

LONGFELLOW.

THE eve of the wedding-day had now arrived; every one at the Abbey was fully occupied in preparing for the event of the morrow, but, as in all well-regulated establishments, there was no noise, nor bustle, nor confusion; no crossings nor collisions of one with the other; each worked silently and diligently in his own place. All the equipages were to be in requisition; the superb family plate and the best china, neither of which had been used since Lord Northwood had come to take up his permanent abode in the country, were to be brought out. A *déjeuner*, a dinner, and a supper were to be furnished with every delicacy; so the housekeeper, the cook, and their myrmidons had plenty to think of and to do. Gordon and the butler were proudly bringing out from the cellar certain bottles of wine that had been reposing next to the wall since their lord was married. The gardener was busy culling his hoarded treasures to perfume the reception and the banqueting rooms. He was very zealous in doing his duties to-day, as he had been reprimanded somewhat severely for having been absent without leave nearly the entire of the day before. He gave but a confused account of whither he had gone, but some of the servants were at no loss to conjecture, having seen a note in Sabina’s hand-writing (which was rather remarkable) delivered to him by a boy previous to his departure. Though he did not exactly cut off a branch where he ought to have cut only a flower, nor outrage propriety in any striking way, yet his underlings noticed that he was at times so absent he did not hear a question until it was thrice repeated, and on other occasions he was agitated, excited, and irritable.

Above-stairs the house was particularly still ; the Earl had taken his sister out in the phaeton to pay a visit to the ruins of Castle Garde-le-Roi, which she had not seen for a long time, and which was associated in her mind with proud family recollections. Lord Fitzarthur had accompanied Sir Thomas on an equestrian excursion of some length (the baronet having begun to wish he could work off a little of the fat which attracted his brother-in-law's notice and produced nocturnal earthquakes). Lady Caroline was closeted in her own apartment with her waiting-maid, selecting the dresses she wished to have packed up for her wedding-trip. Dr Campbell was not expected at the Abbey that day ; he had on the previous day told the Earl (he told Caroline nothing) he had so many things to do that he could not make his appearance again until the wedding-morning. He had different directions to give Edmund, who was to take care of the poor until the arrival of the new dispensary doctor (being no other than Dr Strong, who was very happy, with the Earl's interest, to step into Campbell's shoes—a much better post than that which he now occupied), who was expected in a week or so. He had a few aged friends to take leave of who bitterly mourned his loss, but to whom he kindly promised that he would not let them pass into the hands of a stranger, but would look in on them often when he took up his abode at the Abbey. He had numerous arrangements to make in his cottage, which he still retained ; some things were to be locked up, some articles left out for Edmund's use, who was to come and study there as before. Rachel was appointed care-taker, with a liberal salary ; the only pleasure his being enriched gave him was that he could now act with more kindness and generosity towards those placed below him than he had ever been able to do before. His clothes, too, were to be packed, and a farewell visit paid to Milly, so on the whole he had quite enough to employ him on this last day without making love—at least in the legitimate quarter.

Lady Caroline having left Elpsley in her room packing her trunks, went into the dressing-room, and lay down on the sofa to rest and to think. How many things a bride has to think of the day before her marriage ! The period of sweet girlhood is vanishing, and the matron's dignity, the matron's duties, the matron's joys, and the matron's sorrows too, lie in a long perspective before her ; and how marvellous is the promise which that future holds out ! every moment of it to be spent with the adored object,

a morning visit from whom formerly was a deep delight,—a bow from whom in the street was treasured as an event. He to make part of her ordinary life, thus converting that life into one long holiday ; the exception to become the rule. Her summer to be a polar one as regards the constant presence of a sun that never sets, but a tropical one in the richness of the flowers that are to crowd about her path, in the perfume of the spicy breezes that are to blow around her,—in the song of strange bright birds above and the flow of soft gushing rivers at her feet. And regrets, too, are not wanting for the old life that is on the point of departure, were it only that it is the *old* life, the only one she ever knew, and she is so accustomed to it ; a sweet familiar friend ; it has been fraught with much happiness ; childhood, youth, and innocence have had their full swing in it, and they and it can never more return. There will be no more light-footed rambles of the maiden in the woods ; no more climbing of trees ; no more flinging of spring-flowers into the air, or into the face of a jocund girl as wild as herself ; no more boundings on the green sward, nor chasing of playful children through lanes and meadows. A more serious and solemn march is going to commence under the eye of a loving guardian, under the guidance of a strong intellect, with a dear helpmate, who, while he walks abreast with her through the calms of life, and claims no invidious superiority, is ever ready, when the storm rises, to rush to the van, fight for his treasure, and spread over her the shadow of his buckler ; with whom in travelling along life's rugged way she is to learn the higher virtues which untried girlhood seldom needs,—patience in suffering, self-reliance, perseverance, the steady re-action against repeated disappointments, the fortitude that must bear early separation, or the resignation that must view without murmuring the inevitable progress of life's decay. And with her childish sports and simplicity, her childish friendships must all be dismissed too. Those "eternal friendships," that spring up over the French grammar and the music-book, gain strength at the looking-glass in the boudoir, effloresce in the summer evening walk, and culminate in the dancing-school or at the birthday feast. The soft, fair arms that are entwined together must be unwound ; the two beautiful heads that lay one against the other, looking like twin rose-buds, must be separated ; for there is a power coming to claim her, that will endure no rival,—he must have all ; but oh ! what an all is he ready to give in return !

Some of these thoughts no doubt floated through the mind of Lady Caroline on this occasion, but not all of them ; she had been reared too exclusively and artificially for many of the simpler regrets ; some of the more solemn feelings were perhaps beyond her depth ; but as far as clothing a future, to be passed with Campbell, in all the brightest hues of fancy, she would have been fully adequate to that, did not freezing recollections come in to lay the blighting finger of truth on the too-warm tints of the landscape.

"It is sometimes hard to bear with the silence of God," says a thoughtful writer, now passed from among us. But the silence of God is only the direct course of nature : could we hear an answer to our prayers thundered from the skies, and live ? Instinct shrinks from it, reason declines it, and our teachers tell us that there is a subtle hidden path along which a response may travel to our souls without shaking the fragile framework of the body. Help may come down, strength may spring up, and the victory may be gained, and God in his silence and his invisibility may have graciously ordered all. But it is hard to bear with the silence of a visible, tangible, earthly object of worship. There is an eye that can beam, a tongue that can speak, a beating heart that can love, all near you, but still averted, still dumb, still cold. Ay, and you have occasionally seen those organs leap into life and motion, responding to the appeal of some minstrel who could find the chord that would vibrate, some Theorus who could win an answer from the god.

Her reverie was interrupted by the entrance of one of her maids, bearing a bandbox.

"My lady, here is your wedding bonnet," she said, with a pleased look ; "it has been just sent home by the Northwood milliner."

"My wedding bonnet ! I have got it already ; Lady Anne Ffolliott brought it from London with my other things."

"This box is directed to your ladyship."

"Show it to me."

The servant brought it near her, and she read on the lid :—

"The wedding hat for Lady Caroline Fitzarthur."

A strange sort of fear came over her.

"Who on earth brought it ?"

"A boy, my lady, who went away immediately."

"I insist on your calling him back."

"Oh dear, my lady, he is half a mile off; he came fifteen minutes ago, at least, but I was waiting to bring it up until—"

"How dare you not bring things up the moment they arrive? go down directly!"

The servant departed with inflamed and unsatisfied curiosity.

When Caroline found herself alone she opened the box and drew from it a white satin hat, with a frightful horn on each side, made exactly after the engraving of the Lady Adela's hat which was in 'The Antiquities of the House of Northwood.' She gave a great start and a cry that nearly amounted to a shriek, but luckily Elpsley did not hear her, as the door between was shut. She noticed a slip of written paper on the bottom of the box. She hastened to read it. "The wedding hat to be worn to-morrow by Lady Caroline Fitzarthur, on the occasion of her marriage with Anthony the monk."

She threw herself on the sofa, ready to faint. Who could be the author of this cruel act? None of the old people about who were acquainted with the story in question knew anything of the horned hat having been found on the edge of the lake; this could only have been learned from the old folio in the library, which no one but herself and her father and brother ever looked into. The library, too, was a dark out-of-the-way room, that had not been shown even to Campbell or Sarah Bolton; it contained nothing but antique, dingy books; the modern attractive volumes were all in the study and the sitting-rooms. And she called to mind that although she had promised, she subsequently neglected showing the engraving of the hat to Sarah. But it was an insult to Sarah to seek reasons why she could not have played this trick, or whatever it was,—as if she could be capable of such a deed. And if the story of the hat were even known in the neighbourhood, she wondered whom she had ever offended, that they should seek, by this ugly device, to make her nervous, uneasy, and sad, at a time when the sympathies of all attend on a young and delicate woman. So the hat lay before her a mystery and a marvel, and a ghastly reminder of a tragic and hateful story which she had been particularly anxious to banish into the regions of obscurity and myth. Disgusted with the sight of it, she replaced it in the bandbox, and then locked up the latter in a large wardrobe that occupied one side of the room.

She longed for the arrival of Sarah: the carriage was gone for her, but still an hour must elapse before she could be at the Ab-

bey. Poor Caroline could not rest, so after relieving herself with a flood of tears, she put on her bonnet and shawl, determined to walk down the avenue, and perhaps meet her friend at the gate. So she set out along that great, broad, straight entrance, as direct and as unbending as fate.

It was a dark, still day towards the end of November, equally removed from sunshine and rain. The sky was of one leaden aspect, with no preponderance of cloud in any quarter,—a smooth, unchanging vault. The few withered leaves that were left on the trees remained in their places, though held by a mere thread; there was not energy nor life enough in the air to produce the little movement that might send them wandering in their levity until in zigzag course they might slowly find the ground. Those that had already fallen lay clotted and decaying on the wet avenue. A few crows were cawing over-head, but all the song-birds were silent. Some shivering-looking sheep were feeding on the grass at her right hand, and stared at her with that mixture of stolidity and fear which makes them too stupid to fly, and too timid to attack, and forms a perfect bar to any familiarity or kindness. Two or three little girls whom she met carrying parcels to the house, alarmed at finding themselves so close to “my lady,” whom they had seen a few times only, in the coach and four, turned away their heads with that affronted, repulsive look that bashfulness gives the rude and uncultivated. A stout lad with a basket on his back (there was something arriving every half-hour), not having an idea that the grand bride would be walking abroad on such a day, took the person he met for a mantua-maker, and brushed rather closely by her, not pausing in his rude and loud whistling. All this had a particularly sensible effect on her, nursed and petted in seclusion, and only approached with deference, or fawning, or devoted love. She never felt so depressed, so chilled, and so much alone.

She was suddenly started by the sound of a shot fired by a man who was rambling about the field which lay beyond the lime-trees on her left, and immediately after a thrush fell a few yards in front of her. She ran to it and found it in its agony. Its speckled breast was heaving convulsively, and it glanced at her with its soft full eyes, as if craving some aid in its dying pain. The feathers under its heart, where the shot had entered, were ruffled, and dabbled with blood. She gazed at it for a few moments, and then all was still. Her stomach sickened, and her

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head became giddy, and she leant her back against a tree. Then she got irritated, as was her wont with those who had attempted to bring anguish and suffering within her ken. She crossed an opening in the trees through which the man had fired, and looked over the fence into the field. She would threaten the intruder with Lord Northwood's wrath, and tell him that he was very near killing her. However, he had disappeared. She returned and took another look at the dead bird. The film was dull across its once beautiful eye, which now resembled a bruised black bead, and the whole body had already acquired that look of blank annihilation which even in the lowest animals strikes such a thrill through the beholder. Whatever notes might gladden her ear next spring, that voice was hushed for ever. She dashed away her tears ;—it was so foolish to be thus affected by such a thing ! Were not there birds every day at the second course that had all perished in the same way ? Sarah would soon be here to comfort and cheer her—and to-morrow ! processions, and vows, and rejoicings, and congratulations, and she, the glittering centre of a worshipping, admiring crowd ; her enjoyment, her happiness, the sole object of the present head of the great house of Northwood :—the man she adored, on the point of being bound to her for ever ! Little she would think then of gunshot wounds and clotted blood, and eyes distorted by dying agonies.

When she reached the gate there was no appearance of the carriage as yet, but she noticed a man walking up and down the road opposite to the entrance. When he saw her, he eagerly approached the gate, on the inside of which she was leaning. He was dressed in the ordinary garb of an English gentleman, but a nearer survey revealed to her the dark complexion and fine features of the Indian. She turned, and was hastening away, but he called to her to stay, in a tone that had the same force of detention as the grasp of a powerful hand.

"What can you require of me ?" she cried ; "you do me more injury than you can think ; I don't wish to have any conversation with you."

"If I injure you, it is the very reverse of what I desire to do ; my object has been to save you, and I cannot."

He spoke in a serious, quiet, English fashion ; his wild manner was quite laid aside ; he now seemed a Hindoo in nothing but the colour of his skin. She looked at him doubting and wondering.

"Are you really the same person who assailed me so violently the night I was walking home with—a friend?"

"Yes, I am; but I did not assail you; my object was to save you from ruin, as I thought; knowing what he was, I had good reason to judge you in danger, and if I could not otherwise have rescued you, I would have stabbed him, when your brother fortunately came up; it was well; for I learned afterwards that then, at least, his object was blameless."

"Good heavens! why have you such a dreadful opinion of one whose conduct has ever been honourable, kind, upright?"

"If such is your experience of him, you are justified in expressing yourself as you do. But those who have once fallen into deep and deadly sin,—oh, beware of them!—But it is idle to talk in this manner now. Young lady, I have been walking here for two hours, with a faint hope of seeing you coming out in your carriage, which I would have stopped, that I might speak a few words to you; I never expected the good fortune of seeing you on foot. You are going to be married to-morrow to that man."

Caroline said nothing. Her pride was hurt by hearing Campbell called "that man," and she was shocked at the previous language that had been used in reference to him, but bashfulness sealed her lips; she blushed and looked down, while some fascination detained her rooted where she stood. He looked steadily at her.

"I hold myself blameless. An innocent victim there must be;—yes;—but as Heaven is my witness, I did not desire that it should be you, for even the first day I saw you I felt an interest in you. Do you remember the words I whispered to you when I took the liberty of handing you into your carriage?—For even then I guessed how it would be."

"You said something; I am sure I scarcely understood it."

"You *will* understand it, you *will* be sorry that you so little heeded the warning."

"How could you suppose," she cried, "that a wild word dropped at random, as it were, by a stranger from the East, who seemed scarcely sane, could influence me respecting a person whom all my friends knew and held in estimation?"

"Well, perhaps it was madness, but I could do no more. I am half insane sometimes. My heart-strings are strained with suffering; my brain is dizzy with working out the same idea always—always; through the long summer's day; through the

long winter's night ; under the dews of August,—under the frosts of January ;—what cared I for the pelting storm, or the scorching heats ? A deed was to be done, and how ? That question is answered at last. I say to you now what I longed to say, but feared I could not. If the pestilence that is sent upon another blight you too,—blame not me ; I would stand between the living and the dead,—I would bid the pure and unoffending walk on in their innocence, untouched, but they would not."

"For God's sake," cried Caroline, "what do you mean ? Is it possible you have any design of coming to the churchyard to-morrow, with the object of making some attack on a person whom you hate for no reason, and who has never offended you ?"

"Never offended me ! ha ! ha ! but let that pass, No ; I swear solemnly I have no intention of crossing your path to-morrow ; and I shall be many miles from the churchyard when you and your party are there. You will never see me again. The Hindoo that haunted these groves and hill-sides is departing, vanishing, dying ;—to-morrow he will be gone, leaving not a shadow of his former self behind !"

He shot off, and at the same instant the wished-for carriage arrived. The porter opened the gate, and Sarah, on looking out of the window, saw a young girl standing near the door of the lodge, pale, agitated, and sad-looking, whom, to her amazement, she recognized to be the supposed glorious, happy bride. On a sign from Caroline, the coachman stopped, and she got in.

"Why are you here, and what is the matter with you ?" asked Sarah, eagerly.

"I walked to the gate to meet you, and just as I reached it, that Indian ran up to me, and, as usual, said a number of disagreeable things."

She then related the chief parts of their conversation. A discussion took place as to whether they should tell the gentlemen of the alarming and threatening language he had used. Caroline did not wish to bring it forward at this particular juncture ; he had promised solemnly, and with an appearance of great sincerity, that he would not molest her or her friends the next day ; the morning after, early, she and Campbell and the Earl were to set off to a great distance, where they would be safe from him if he was planning any aggression ; and when they came back, if he had not left the country,—which he declared he designed doing, as well as she could understand him,—she would tell Campbell every

word he said, and his own judgment would direct him what to do. Sarah agreed that this was perhaps the most prudent course to pursue.

When they arrived at the house, poor Caroline mentioned her other shock, showing the ominous gift she had just received. Sarah was greatly startled, and very much astonished that Caroline, so secluded and inoffensive a person, could have any secret enemy who felt a malicious pleasure in thus mocking her on the eve of her marriage; and the same enigma presented itself to her, too,—where the tormentor could have procured the necessary information. After talking the matter over for some time, Sarah urged Caroline to treat it as wise people generally do all anonymous communications, as if it had never happened.

"Lock up the hat," she added, "until you can find an opportunity of destroying it, and do not mention to a single being that you have received it."

"Perhaps," said Caroline sighing, "this is only the commencement of a series of persecutions."

"Do not say so," answered Sarah. "This *coup* which its silly author no doubt thinks specially clever, is the beginning and end of his or her grand invention. It is not very easy to carry on a long persecution under the covert of 'anonymous.' Now, you must show me your entire wedding paraphernalia, and I am most anxious to receive your approbation of my bridesmaid's attire; let us begin immediately to draw out our treasures while we have the house to ourselves."

She then kissed her kindly, and Caroline became a little cheerful, and once more deeply interested in her preparations for the morrow. At dinner, with her firm-minded friend at her side, she endeavoured to appear in good spirits, but a feeling of deep dejection had taken possession of her mind, that she could not—did not attempt to throw off.

On that same evening, about six o'clock, Campbell, after a weary day, proceeded to conclude it by making a farewell visit to Mrs Davenport.

He found her in the drawing-room, lying on the sofa as usual. "Milly!" was all he said, and he stooped down towards her. She thought he was going to kiss her;—he had never done so before, but there was no telling what he might be tempted to, in this parting hour. However, all he did was to push her hair off her forehead, and gaze on her as a mother does on her children, when

she goes into the nursery at night and all are asleep. He then sat down on a chair close to the sofa.

"Where is Davenport?" said he.

"I do not know; but he is not in the house," she answered.

"Campbell went to the door and bolted it. "I would not lock out the master of the house," said he, with a slight smile, "but the children have a habit of rushing in whenever they choose, and I am not able to bear it this evening. Have you been invited to that *déjeuner* to-morrow?"

"Yes; but of course I refused."

"I suppose you did! I should think you did! If I looked up from my post at that altar and saw you standing near me—not beside me,—I would hew them all down right and left; ay, and your husband among them, and I would carry you away to some place where no eye that had seen us before should ever behold us again."

"Oh, this is terrible, Robert! you never spoke in this manner till now."

"Then I always felt so. Do you think that if I had been on the spot when you gave your hand to Davenport, that I would not have acted in the same way? But what use are words? Though when they are all that is left to a man there is some satisfaction in them. I was half-reconciled to my lot,—drilled into it by necessity,—and was beginning to take with sullen resignation that share in you that the plunderers had left me, till this girl starts up and claims part of my time, and very probably fancies she possesses the whole of my heart! I am acting no part, but she is infatuated! Poor miserable individuals! How we fret and fume about our private sufferings which do not come within the scheme of the Almighty! He has made a great moving, progressing mass called man, and it is a perfect success; it is advancing to a certain state of finish, and beauty, and fullness, and it is abundantly supplied with machinery for the completion of the design; a wheel flung off here, a spring broke there, a screw lost in one place, a thin plate bruised and destroyed in another—what matters all that when it is furnished with a tenfold supply of the same material? But when a lever breaks, a miracle must be worked to mend it, forsooth, its presence not being missed in the general apparatus. Ay, I think all this when I am at home alone, but when I come here and look at you, how I shrink back into the pettiness of my own heart! How I envy the honest Greek, and

the indignant, justice-loving Hebrew, when they boldly reproached their God for failing them in their need, and saw neither absurdity nor blasphemy in giving vent to their impulses. I, like them, feel disposed, in a moment of weakness no doubt, to inquire of the great Framer of the universe why he throw man's volitions in one place, and his powers in another ;—why, with respect to us two, he blended our souls together, and still suffered material obstacles to thrust themselves between the union of our persons ;—then I laugh at my smallness, but the conclusion of all is to weep over my individuality,—such a nullity—so far beneath the notice of the self-existing absolute will. Then I sigh for the time when my spirit shall be drawn into the Divine, or diffused through the immensity of that space from which its particles may have been first gathered towards one another."

"Robert, half our misery is caused by our own determination to take the darkest view of our destiny ; by the fatal tendency to throw the phantoms of our diseased minds out into external nature, and thus to give them a positive existence."

"No, my Milly, no ; I am taking no subjective views of my lot. I see the twofold anguish brought to meet for my benefit ; the single alone of which is found enough to prostrate its victim. First, I see two hearts united in all the strength of a passionate love, and the hands not joined, the lives spent apart, each individual by compulsion a stranger to the other. Such has been the experience of my past career. Secondly, I see two hands clasped, blessed by the priest, and supposed to be blessed by God, two lives to run henceforth in one channel, and two souls eternal strangers to one another. That is to be the commencement of a new career on which I am to enter to-morrow. Either lot is considered quite sufficient for any person whose title to suffering is only of the usual character."

Mrs Davenport said no more ; she saw his heart was too thoroughly warped by disappointment and suffering to be affected by any poor remonstrance she could make ; she of all persons, whose very presence there, as Davenport's wife, was verifying the reality of the first dark picture.

He suddenly roused himself, tossed his hair from his forehead, and drew a long breath, with that reactionary effort that flings off despair instinctively.

"Come, Milly, it will not be so much worse, after all, than it was before. I am to accompany Lord Northwood and his daugh-

ter to St Leonard's-on-Sea the day after to-morrow ; they will spend a fortnight there,—I will not consent to remain an hour longer,—and when I return I will visit you every day,—which I could not do hitherto, because of my being taken up with my profession ;—and we will talk, and sing, and read together, as of old,—shan't we, my sweetest ?—I am going to new furnish the parlour of my cottage, and I will sit and read there constantly, and so will be near you a great part of my time, and will attend your children just as usual."

Still she made no answer ; he looked at her,—she was in an agony of tears ; she could resist his despair, but his attempt to cheer her was not to be borne. He too succumbed, and wept bitterly. But the time was flying. He dried his eyes.

"Milly, before I go, I will ask only one thing. Do you remember the last evening I kissed you ? in my father's summer-house, the night before I was sent away. I solemnly declare I never kissed any woman since that hour. I have done worse,—yes, yes, you know I have ; but the moral, tender, refined sentiment that prompts the kiss I never felt for any one but you. Now give me one or two kisses to fortify me for my grievous trial to-morrow."

And what ought Amelia Davenport to have answered to this request ? Verily, a calm frigid observer of the scene, taking notes, with his clear intellect and heart beating time to all the proprieties of life, would expect her directly to say :—

"Think no more of me ; we have been long enough in this questionable position with regard to one another ; henceforth let the new connection you are on the point of forming occupy your sole thoughts and attention ; endeavour to make your wife happy, and think of me no more ; or if you feel you are utterly unable to love this young lady, write to her now, even at the last moment, and tell her so ; it would be better for you both to part while there is yet time ; but on the other hand you must give up all future intercourse with me, for it seems to create in you a distaste for making a virtuous alliance with any other woman. Above all things, do not imagine that I will be guilty of an unlawful act that you may thereby gain courage to perform a lawful one with a suitable degree of dissimulation." Grand words these, no doubt, and they would come very well from a Virtue in some old apologue, but Milly was no personification of one quality, she was a woman ; and that is a very complicated assemblage of

various emotions and principles ; and over the latter the emotions often gain the ascendancy, and if they did not,—if her feelings and impulses were not sometimes irresistingly yielded to, she could not perform some of the greatest duties,—or perhaps noble acts,—that fall peculiarly to her share ; and though error may be the occasional consequence of this predominance, the advantages preponderate to an incalculable amount. If she did not forgive seventy times, what would become of the seventy times erring husband ? If she did not love through ingratitude, neglect, unkindness, and sin, what would be the end of the reckless, licentious, spendthrift son, what of the fallen daughter ?

We could fill pages with this topic, but leave it to the justice of the reader—for poor Dr Campbell is standing over her, and she gazes up into his beseeching unfathomable eyes, upon his god-built forehead lodged within the clustering masses of hair, like a temple in its consecrated grove ; that forehead which to her had ever been the shrine of a mysterious deity, which, though greater than herself, was not too far above her, but that it could guide, enlighten, and enlarge her soul. There was the play-fellow of her childhood, the lover of her youth, the guardian angel of her later years, the adoring, the faithful against time, against her own change, and against all other female attractions. And he asked for one farewell kiss before he went away—who could tell for how long a time, whatever he might now think and promise ? . . .

She stretched out her arms to him and he fell upon her face.

Long years of misery had passed since last those lips met, but “ the time between was nothing worth,” it was consumed in the furnace of that brief moment. He was twenty once more, fresh, warm, and young, and she was sixteen, in the heaven of her charms, and they were in the garden bower of Duncan Campbell.

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The front door suddenly opened and Davenport's step was heard in the hall.

“ Oh, here is Arthur ! ” she cried, “ and the drawing-room door is fastened.”

He sprang from the sofa and pushed back the bolt. But the husband went into his study and shut the door of it. Campbell's heart was beating violently, he flung himself on a chair. How like the effect of that tread of Davenport's foot was to that of the

tramp of his father's horse the last night he had kissed her ! How like the whole was, somehow !

He must go home now.

"Only a fortnight away, Milly !"

"Oh, it is no use, Robert, no use, how near you may be. If she loves you a quarter as well as I do—did—she will never let you out of her sight," murmured the miserable Milly.

"Don't say that ; my deeds will speak for themselves ; I make no promises now ; I scorn promises !"

He rushed out of the house. As he walked through the shrubbery and on to the village green, he kept repeating the words, "only a fortnight," until the constant re-iteration of them appeared to amount to an indefinite length of time. At last the pile of "fortnight" heaped upon "fortnight" began to look like eternity itself. Then a strange, horrible foreboding came over him that he should never see her again. So he would go back at once and see her, if only for a second.

He retraced his steps with all speed, and dashed into the drawing-room. It was plunged in darkness. "Milly !" No answer. He groped for the sofa, found it, but it was empty. He must see her again, or surely there would be some truth in the presentiment.

He opened the door of the dining-room ; it was dark and cold, there was certainly no one there. He was preparing to make his way up to the nursery, under pretence of taking a look at the children before his departure, when the study-door opened and Davenport appeared with a candle in his hand.

"Ho !—your humble servant ! What in the world are you doing, moping about here like a ghost ? only you are making a little more noise, knocking bodily against the hall chairs in the dark ; why did not you ring if you wanted to know where to find us ? Come in."

Campbell followed him into the study, where he had been making coffee for himself.

"I only wanted—"

"Ha ! I know," interrupted Davenport, "you wanted to see that I was quite ready,—not oblivious—fully prepared to appear at a certain place precisely at eleven to-morrow."

"If you mean Ashcombe Church, I don't care a straw whether you are there or not," answered Campbell.

"Do you forget you are going to be married there ? I flatter myself the parson is a very necessary ingredient in the business ;

just as much so as flour in a plum-pudding. Very sweet and rich certainly, but the binding-material, my man ! who would cement you without me ? ”

“ For Heaven’s sake let me alone. If a rubrical ceremony is necessary to make me physician to Lady Caroline Fitzarthur, I have been leading a very sinful life since she came to the country ; and that is all I can be to a person I don’t like.”

“ Well, of all the states of mind for a bridegroom to be in ! ”—

“ Let me alone, I tell you again. Where is Mrs Davenport ? ”

“ Oh, you are come to say good-bye to my *missus*. Well, you are rather late ; she is nearly undressed by this time, for I insisted on her going to bed. Indeed, though I seem in spirits, I am very uneasy about her. I found her by herself in the drawing-room, low and weak—crying in fact ; and when I was going to kiss her,—as I always do after having been all the day away from her,—she pushed me aside, and said she did not deserve it ! She never said such an extravagant thing before. Her father once told me to keep up her spirits, for she was near becoming insane once, and I am sure, if this be not like madness, I don’t know what is.”

“ She is not insane,” said Campbell, looking down ; “ nor inclined to be so.” The answer she had made startled and sobered him ; he now resolved not to ask to see her again, though he might, as she had been pronounced ill,—but, perhaps, she would be displeased, and what if, in a fit of virtuous reaction, she should tell him to come no more ?

Davenport continued.

“ I know she is fretting at losing you, and cannot reconcile herself to this new man.”

“ What new man ? I’ll attend here as usual.”

“ Impossible, with your greater distance, and new duties. I know I will prevent such an unreasonable draft on your time as much as I can. Lord Northwood would very justly blame me if I sanctioned your dedicating so much of your life to us as you have hitherto done.”

“ Very well,” said Campbell, rising ; “ they will discover at the Abbey whether they will have the more of my company by your throwing me off.”

“ Such an ungracious term ! I wonder at you ! ” said Davenport, looking hurt.

"You will wonder more in a little time."

He then walked out of the room. Davenport followed him, extending his hand kindly.

"Well, good night, my dear fellow! I will give Mrs D. a number of civil messages and adieus from you."

"Thank you, you need not trouble yourself to give her any message from me," answered Campbell, with a bitter smile.

They would certainly have appeared a little flat and cold after what he had given himself. So he departed, leaving Davenport amazed and vexed.

"I wish I had never consented to marry him. Such a temper as he is in! It will be like a mockery of the Divine rite. As it is, I would not go an inch there to-morrow, only it would be serving that good fellow, Lord Northwood, and that unfortunate girl, so badly."

He then sat down to his coffee with a lighter heart and an easier conscience than some of his friends had.

Campbell dragged his weary limbs back to his cottage, and threw himself on the sofa; he was too tired to stay up, and too miserable to go to bed. In a short time Rachel came in to say that Mrs Ford wished to see him.

"Mrs Ford! send her in."

Nannie entered, looking most uncomfortably like Lewis's "Grim white woman that haunts yon wood." We have often noticed that old women are extremely fond of wearing very light-coloured apparel. Nannie, dressed in her best, wore a straw bonnet, trimmed with white ribbon, a white Cashmere shawl, and a white "bobbinet" veil, long out of fashion, which a "district visitor" had given her. Her gown, indeed, was dark purple, but the shawl covered it in a great measure.

Campbell started when he saw her, but saluted her in a friendly manner, and bid her be seated.

"It is many a year since you walked so far, Mrs Ford; is anything the matter?"

"I did not walk, sir; I got a set-down from a friend who was passing my door in his waggon, and, as I had the opportunity, I came here, desiring much to say a few words to you."

"Well."

"You are going to be married to-morrow."

"Really, I suppose I am, for you are the fourth person, at least, who has told me so to-day, and I have faith enough to ac-

cept as true the information of four persons, among whom there has been no collusion."

This might be a playful answer, if given in a certain tone and manner, but his mode of delivering it showed that he was tired, dispirited, and, in short, horridly cross.

Nannie rose.

"Where the deuce are you going? Did you come all the way from your cottage here to tell me I was to be married to-morrow? If so, it was a pity you did not calculate first whether the novelty of the information would be worth the trouble of the ride."

"I did not expect I was telling you anything you did not know, sir; what I meant was to introduce the subject; but I am an ignorant, poor woman, and do things clumsily."

"Come, come! sit down again, and say your say. Will you have some cold meat and wine?"

"Oh no, thank you, sir. All I want is a little civility that costs nothing."

"There you are mistaken: civility often costs a great deal; on some occasions courteous language stands a man ten times as high as a few glasses of wine; what matters a couple of shillings compared to schooling one's words and phrases into a fictitious smoothness that jars with one's feelings and impulses. Nannie, you know me long enough to understand my temper; speak on."

"I hear you intend to go on some excursion the day after you are married."

"Yes; that is their plan."

"Listen to me, then. Don't wait for the next day; go as soon as ever you can after the wedding; from the church-gate, if possible."

"Why do you advise me to do that?" asked he, looking surprised.

"Because it will be the safest thing for you: I cannot say more. Besides, I am not thoroughly informed; but I see a tempest scowling over all your gladness."

"Give me a plain reason why I should make this change. I am not inclined myself to do it without good cause; and what shall I say to them, after recommending them not to set out till the next day?"

"Oh, are you not clever enough to invent some plausible excuse for altering the plan? Do, my dear child, set out the mo-

ment you are married. Stay away a good while, and do not tell any one at home what place you are going to."

She looked at him earnestly and beseechingly.

"Well, it is too bad to desire a person to act as if he had committed some crime, but to keep him in the dark as to the motives for such conduct."

"There is something bad in preparation, sir; that is all I can say,—but I am sure of it. There are those I love whom I would not betray for millions, and I would give millions if I had them to insure your safety; so all I can do between both is to entreat of you, without giving you any reason, to leave this country one day sooner—just one day—what matter would that be?"

"Why, the young lady would be half-killed to-morrow, hurrying in such an unexpected manner to set off on a journey. And what could I say to her father? I insist on your giving me some tangible grounds to go on, or I will certainly let things proceed as arranged. I do not want to be thought mad."

"I can say no more," said Nannie, with a look of despair.

"Then I won't disturb the present plan. Is there going to be an attack made on the wedding party? We'll be a match for them. Are they intending to assail me in Lord Northwood's house? They will rue the day they do that, poor wretches! I am as safe as possible, Nannie. I go to church in a carriage accompanied by a large party, and return the same way. I never leave the Abbey again until I step into a carriage to begin my journey;—how am I safer if I begin it to-morrow? No, Nannie, I will make no change, 'tis all nonsense. At the same time I give you notice that when I come back I will compel you to tell out everything you know, for I will no longer tolerate these half revelations."

Campbell having meditated for a few minutes, said :—

"I have not seen that Indian about the roads this long time. Is he gone away?"

"No, he is not," said Nannie, in a low, solemn voice.

"Do you know when is going?"

"No, I do not," she answered in the same tone, while her forehead, her hair, and her bobbinet veil seemed all to grow whiter still.

"Well, then, whatever conspiracy is brewing in that quarter, I promise you I will blow it all to pieces when I return home. Meantime, I thank you for your solicitude, but, displayed as it

is, it must go for nothing. I have no more to say. Shall I walk part of the way home with you ? ”

“ No thank you, sir ; no one will molest me.”

She rose.

“ Dr Campbell, you have been attending me long and kindly, and I am deeply grateful to you. I would die to save you, but words are nothing, and you may say that my deeds are very lame ; but I have gone to the utmost extent that my limited powers would admit of, and thus I hope you will give me credit for what I have said, although you will not avail yourself of it. Acknowledge, at least, that I am grateful.”

“ Indeed you are, Nannie ; I feel it deeply, and thank you. Whether your conduct is judicious or not, it is equally well meant. But I think you are fanciful. What enemies can I have ? There is one man in the world, certainly, who ought to stab me, and so he does every time I meet him, but it is with his sweet looks. If your son-in-law has tattled anything to his guest,—and that is a point I mean to investigate,—what am I and my affairs to a native of Hindostan ? Good-bye ! While I am away Mr Edmund Bolton will look in on you sometimes.”

He gave her his hand, which she covered with kisses, her face was convulsed with the effort to restrain her sobs. He opened the front door, and she walked slowly away. He gazed after her, and his mind wandered off to scenes in which she had borne a part never to be forgotten. But he had not much time for thought on this agitating day.

As he was turning away from the gate a boy came up, and put a letter into his hand. He went back to his parlour, and read it. It was from Dr Strong, of whom he had requested, a few days before, that he would pay a friendly visit at Sunville as soon as possible, and give him an accurate account of the state in which he found Miss Neville.

Dr Strong informed him that the lady had quite recovered from her late illness, had improved wonderfully in strength, but yet was in a condition far from satisfactory. She was hectic and excited, her pulse very high, and she acknowledged to violent palpitations which, as her friends hinted, kept her awake great part of the night. She talked rapidly, without waiting for an answer to her questions, and there was a strange absence about her at the same time : she appeared to be thinking of something very different from what she was discoursing on with so

much vehemence ; she began a sentence, stopped suddenly, then began another, then stopped again, and ended in laughing hysterically at herself. Her family were evidently much alarmed about her. She saw no visitors, but walked out every day, and sat for a length of time on a seat she had in some sheltered nook, forbidding any one to attend her thither. This he heard from her mother. Dr Strong added that, according to Dr Campbell's request, he had made no allusion to him or his affairs, and none of the ladies had mentioned his name. The letter concluded with congratulations and kind wishes, which Campbell did not read.

In addition to this information conveyed by Dr Strong, we have to add that Miss Neville had had several conversations with the Indian at the waterfall, besides that already mentioned, and that at the two last Thomas Higgin made a third person.

This letter was not likely to act as a sedative on Campbell after his toilsome day, his passionate adieus to Mrs Davenport, and his disturbing interview with Mrs Ford. But he must rest, or he might be so nervous the next morning as to expose himself to notice and disagreeable remarks. What share had his abrupt marriage and apparently unfeeling conduct in Miss Neville's present state of mind ? Was she on the high road to insanity ? He must not dwell on these questions—it was now too late. He flung the letter into the fire, went up to his room in three strides, took a large dose of chloric æther, dashed into bed, and was in a profound sleep in five minutes.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DOCTOR AND THE ANGEL IN ASHCOMBE
CHURCHYARD.

"The bells of the Abbey are ringing
 Their mirthfullest music to-day ;
 And the belles of the village are singing
 Sweet songs in their bridal array :
 Sweet lady ! for thee is the measure,
 For thee are the garlands they bring ;
 For thee are the roses they treasure,
 And thine is the wreath and the ring.
 But the step of the bridegroom is heavy—
 The cheek of the bridegroom is pale . . ."
 SONG ON THE MARRIAGE OF LORD J. R., 1833.

"Cui sis nupta vide, Pandione nata, marito!"—OVID.

THE wedding-morning had arrived, and eight o'clock found Lady Caroline in a deep sleep. This was rather uncommon, perhaps, for a person in her situation ; but we must explain it by stating that the present slumber was produced solely by the force of narcotics. She had, as we mentioned, made an effort to appear cheerful at dinner ; but every one could see how much that effort cost her. Besides the depression caused by the ominous events already detailed, she could not escape from the conviction that Campbell did not care for her. She began to be sure that the Earl had fastened on him and engaged him against his will, with that eagerness which he had always shown in procuring for her whatever she had fixed her affections on ; and she had let her fond parent perceive too plainly that her very life was throbbing away from her with love for this man. But still she would rather utterly part with that life than seek to spend it with one to whom she was so thoroughly distasteful. She had often made up her mind to say something to Campbell in the way of an offer to release him from his engagement, if he himself desired it, but she never had courage to take a step so totally at variance with all the previous tenor of her life. She, adoring

him as she still did, to come coolly forward and propose giving him up! She, weak, self-indulging, relaxed with every kind of gratification, to be capable of a renunciation so stupendous as this! She was not equal to it,—imagining, however, each day that she would certainly have courage to go through with it on the next;—and so the time flew on, and it was now too late.

About one in the morning Elpsley, who had latterly slept in the dressing-room to watch Lady Caroline, came into Sarah's room, apologizing for wakening her, but informing her that her lady had started up, greatly terrified at a dream she had, and insisted on Miss Bolton being brought to her. Sarah hastened to the apartment, and found her in a state of the greatest agitation and horror. She did not know whether she had slept;—oh, yes, she must have slept, she had such a dream! Elpsley was ordered to go back to the dressing-room. Then she told Sarah how she dreamed that she was walking along the avenue,—but it seemed to have a roof of vaulted stone,—and she had the horned hat on her head; she strove to take it off, but it was cemented on firmly;—then the Indian suddenly rushed across her path, and told her it was he that had shot the thrush (she had previously told Sarah the incident of the thrush);—she continued to walk on until she came to the spot where the bird still lay; she stopped and looked at it, and while she continued to gaze it changed its aspect completely, assuming by degrees the form of a man; as the feathers vanished the wound under the heart became more apparent and more gaping;—she looked at the head—the face had become a man's—very white;—but it was Dr Campbell's!

Here she was too much overpowered to go on.

Sarah entreated of her to speak no more of this silly dream,—quite a natural result of the several things that had affected her the day before.

“Oh, I must finish it,—it was so strange, so terrible,—I shall be better if I tell all. I then thought I gave a great shriek,—and so I did, I am sure,—and I fell on this figure—the bird that was,—but it felt hard—so hard and cold—and I looked closely at it and found I was lying on the stone breast of Anthony the Monk!”

Every soothing word that she could think of was said by Sarah; she put her arms round her, and held her on her warm,

loving breast for some time,—she asked should she call her aunt,—her father.

“Oh, no, no! no one but you shall hear my dream; I will tell it to no one else.”

“Certainly not; but you might like to see them about you for a little while.”

“No: do not call any one; you are my greatest comfort; indeed I will be quieter presently.”

In this manner the night was passed until five in the morning; she had not an instant's sleep; sometimes she lay still for a short time, and then started up with a scream. Sarah saw that something must now be done, or she would be quite prostrated by the time the hour for dressing arrived, and would be unable to leave her bed. She ventured to give her a draught which Dr H—— said was to be used only on very particular occasions. This had the desired effect: she fell into a deep sleep.

Then Sarah, too, retired to take a little rest, leaving Elpsley sitting by the bed of her mistress. It is no wonder, then, that the bride was not alert and stirring at eight o'clock in the morning. But the Earl and Lady Anne were in full bustle long before that hour, and through the whole household there was a din of preparation.

Lord Northwood wondered his daughter could be so phlegmatic as to stay in bed so long. He suggested to Elpsley to call her.

The waiting-woman, tutored by Sarah, hinted that her Ladyship had been restless at the beginning of the night.

“Still she must be called; if she is allowed to remain any longer she will be fussed to death, and unable to perform her part on this solemn occasion.”

Elpsley was confused; but fortunately Sarah made her appearance, and as usual set everything to rights, engaging to have the bride quite ready against ten o'clock. She then went into Caroline's apartment, where we will leave her, certain that she will be true to her word.

The young people at Laburnum Lodge meantime were in a very different state of mind from either the bride or the bridegroom. They were all three in high spirits; you would have supposed they were to be the principals on the occasion. George had arrived from Cambridge on the previous afternoon just in

time to embrace Sarah and hand her into Lord Northwood's carriage. Edmund and Charles Routledge were to be Dr Campbell's bridesmen, and the former was willing to fancy himself a person of some importance to-day. Lucy was bewildered with her prospects;—she was actually to be one of Lady Caroline's bridesmaids; and she was to be beautifully dressed; ay,—just the same as her sister and the Miss Routledges; the four young ladies had all held a privy council at Laburnum Lodge, where the dresses were proposed and agreed to. So she was up very early, making preparations, as happy as any bride could be. Her papa too was not to be neglected; besides having Mrs Miller as usual, Quill had been engaged to spend the entire day with him; he was to be there to breakfast; he was to read to him, walk by his Bath-chair if he went in it, dine, play backgammon in the evening, and personate Lucy in every possible way. Nothing would have delighted him more than to have gone to Ashcombe Churchyard early in the morning, where, concealed behind a monument, he might have peeped at the procession, and beheld the doctor conducted to the *halter* in a style that he well deserved; but he most good-humouredly accepted instead thereof the honourable office of care-taker to so important a person as Mr Bolton.

Poor Dr Campbell, little aspiring to be the hero of so many tongues, rose early, more refreshed than the bride by the sleep, like hers, artificially acquired. He dressed himself carefully in new black clothes; he wore a very handsome scarf with a valuable pin in it, the gift of Mr Davenport, whose presents he generally refused, but he accepted something of a chance time, seeing the feelings of the other were wounded by the continual check given to his spirit of independence. Milly's ring was on his little finger, and in each hind-pocket of his coat was a beautiful small silver-mounted pistol. This equipment (namely, ring, pin, and pistols) may appear a singular union of ornaments for a bridegroom, but then Campbell was rather a singular man. The ladies will perhaps be deeply offended with him for wearing Amelia's ring on that hand with which he was about to place a gold ring on the finger of another woman. With regard to the pistols, we must blame Mrs Ford more than himself, for she had inspired him with such a sense of danger that it occurred to him that perhaps some attack might be made on his carriage when he was driving alone to the Abbey, rather than at any other time in the day, when he

would be continually surrounded with friends ; so he thought it as good to have some arms about him.

A fly was waiting at the door to take him to the Abbey ; his trunks were first put in ; he stepped after them himself ; then followed Troubadour, whom he placed on the seat beside him, and kindly shaking hands with Rachel, and telling her to take good care of herself and his house until his return, he drove away. When he passed Mrs Ford's cottage he looked out at the window, and saw her at the door talking to an old friend. Troubadour looked out graciously too ; his master's arm was about his neck.

" Good morning, Mrs Ford ; you see I am all right," he cried, with a smile.

She curtsied : " May Heaven preserve you so, sir ! "

The fly dashed on.

" Dear goodness ! " said the friend, " to see him sitting with his arm round the neck of that great black brute beast ! Well, he'll have it round a more properer neck from this out, I expect."

" I'd sooner he'd keep to the dog," said Nannie.

Dr Campbell arrived at Northwood Abbey without any molestation. The men-servants all received him with great respect and assiduity. One placed his luggage in a convenient part of the hall ; another carefully conducted Troubadour to the yard, and tied him up in a comfortable outhouse ; another took his hat and rubbed some white mark off his coat. At last he was ready. Just as he was proceeding towards the breakfast-room, the footman said, " Excuse me, sir, but do you wish to take the pistols into the parlour ? Ladies are so cowardly."

" Oh no ! " cried Campbell, looking confused, and he pulled them out of his pockets. " Where—where shall I put them ? "

After some debating, the man made out a high shelf in the inner passage leading from the great hall to the breakfast-room, and there they were deposited for the present.

He was received cordially by the family, who were assembled in the breakfast-room—all, except Lady Caroline and Miss Bolton. Lady Anne thought she had never beheld so interesting a being ; he looked melancholy and thoughtful, without any of that suppressed triumph in his glance—far less that effervescing glee in his manner—that she had often seen in other bridegrooms who had far less reason to be elate than he had. But she would have wished to have seen him in better spirits ; he was actually depressed. He inquired for Lady Caroline, and was told she would

soon appear. Lord Fitzarthur, who had been hastening with his breakfast, had now finished, and went to the drawing-room to be ready to receive the Boltons and the Routledges when they arrived. It was an understood matter that the company were to take their usual breakfast at home before they came; the hospitality at the Abbey was to commence with the *déjeuner* after the party returned from church.

Campbell sat down to table, and began silently to eat. Lady Anne could not take her eyes off him. But how little conception she had of the thoughts that were passing through his brain! He thought of his true and only love—his real wife, who still could never be his: then he thought of the warm-hearted, great-minded Miss Neville; and his spirit died within him at the mere suspicion of what her present feelings might be. And thus the period of his youth had passed in stormy trials and bitter sorrows, and he was nearly thirty-four, and it was time for him to anchor in the still waters of maturer age, and the ring was at last ready, and the priest robed to bind him—to whom? to one of the pets of society indeed, a privilege which, *cæteris paribus*, he would have deprecated rather than coveted; but to one, moreover, whom he could neither “worship with his body,” nor love with his heart, nor esteem with his understanding—whom he could cherish only as a fellow-creature, talk to only as a child, respect only as a being whose state in another life or another form of existence would be as good, and might be better than his own, and to whom he could show kindness only from feelings of humanity as he would to a little pup or a canary-bird. To hope that she could cheer his hearth and enrich his home, was to hope to light a spacious hall with a wax taper, or to water a far-spreading garden with a few drops of dew.

Sir Thomas hastily despatched his last cup of tea and went off to the drawing-room, hoping he might have a little fun there with the bridesmaids before this portentous bride and bridegroom should throw the chill of their presence over the scene. Campbell had nearly finished his breakfast when Lady Caroline came in leaning on Sarah. He rose directly, advanced and shook hands with both ladies.

The bride was in a blaze of splendour as far as costly attire went;—the usual trousseau,—why describe it?

Dr Campbell placed Caroline at the table and sat down beside her.

"Are you worse to-day?" he asked, giving her a piercing look that rendered an answer quite unnecessary.

"Yes, indeed; I had a bad night," said she.

"Very natural,—very natural, indeed," cried the Earl, who always tried to make the best of everything, in consequence of the dislike nervous people have to believe in the existence of anything unpleasant, whilst on the other hand they are prone to conjure up fancied ills that the even, calm mind never dreams of. "Now, Campbell," he continued, "I depend on you to make her take something strengthening, to enable her to get on well in church,—you understand;—trying—very trying."

She did not heed her father; there was neither blush nor smile. Campbell gave her some fowl, and insisted on her eating it; this attention cheered her a little, and she did her best to swallow it, though hardly able. Then her aunt crowded everything she thought desirable before her, and at last she got through her breakfast. Sarah took hers in her usual composed manner; there was hardly a word said. Campbell, having looked at the bride again, held a short conference with Miss Bolton, who went up-stairs and brought down a bottle. He put a portion of its contents into a glass of water and ordered Caroline to take it; she obeyed, and after a little while seemed much better; he then told her aunt she was ready. Lady Anne gave her arm to her niece and led her to the drawing-room. Dr Campbell and Sarah followed. The Earl had previously gone to his apartment. In the drawing-room the scene was more cheerful. The odour of the delicious flowers that had been hoarded till now, and were tastefully disposed in vases, gave a reviving influence to the air; everything had a festive appearance, for there were some decorations beyond even the usual sumptuousness of this apartment. There was a pleasant hum of conversation; Lord Fitzarthur was talking to Miss Routledge; George Bolton was devoted to Fanny, and was conversing as knowingly about Cambridge as if he was a questionist, and not a fresh man of a few weeks, standing; Sir Thomas Ffolliott and Mrs Routledge were already excellent friends; and Charles was obliged to content himself with what amusement he could derive from the innocent delight of Lucy Bolton. When the door opened there was a hush, and every eye was directed towards the bride.

"How interesting she looks!" thought Mrs Routledge, "but how shockingly pale!"

Then followed the bridegroom, not looking brighter than the bride, but more serene and statue-like. On him it devolved to introduce Lady Anne and Lady Caroline to his friends the Rountledges, as the parties had never met before. He did so with self-possession and quiet grace. Lord Fitzarthur, who had left the breakfast-room before Sarah came down, started when he saw her in her wedding garment; - he thought she looked quite magnificent.

The carriages were now at the door, and Lord Northwood was come down from his room. A new barouche of dark purple colour, drawn by four splendid grey horses, with two postilions and the full allowance of footmen,—all, horses and men, being decked with wedding favours,—was to convey the bride. With her were to go the Earl and Lady Anne, with the addition of Miss Bolton, from whom she would not be separated, otherwise the four bridesmaids were to have gone together in another conveyance. The bridegroom, Sir Thomas, and Lord Fitzarthur went in the next carriage, and then followed the rest of the party, arranged no doubt with equal propriety.

The quiet ride to the church,—for everything was done without bustle,—seemed to have a very good effect on Lady Caroline, and her watchful friends were fully confident that she would go through the ceremony pretty much at her ease. Arrived at the church gate, they all alighted, and the bride walked up to the door between her father and her aunt. She happened to cast her eyes towards one of the turnstiles of which she had expressed such high disapprobation on the first day that she visited the churchyard. The stile she glanced at was the western one, opening into the by-ways leading to Laburnum Lodge and the town of Northwood. Just at the outside of this was standing a dark, ugly-looking, small, covered carriage, with the windows shut, and the blinds down. Small, indeed, it should be to enable it to rumble on any terms through those narrow lanes. An ill-dressed lad was standing by the pony that drew it. If there was any living being within, it was invisible. Lady Caroline wondered what possible business it could have there; some impudent idlers were probably in it, come to peep at her wedding procession: they could not see much certainly, through those closed windows. Then she thought of the Indian and his dark sayings, but he actually would not fit into that little tumble-down of a thing, and besides she had an unshaken confidence in the manner in

which he had promised not to molest her. Whether her father or aunt noticed this carriage, she did not know,—they said nothing;—her brother, too, was now by her side, and followed by the four bridesmaids they entered the church.

The bridegroom came next with his two bridesmen, Charles and Edmund, on each side of him. They met Mr Davenport waiting for them, and he went in along with them. As they walked on, Campbell, raising his eyes towards the chancel, at the rails of which the bride and her friends were standing, encountered, hanging over the communion table, the picture of Jairus's daughter just beginning to waken from the dead. The damsel's face was intended for a likeness of Miss Purdon; it was not a very good one,—at least, to those who knew only the laughing radiance of *her* face a body just returning to life could bring scarcely any idea of the original;—but to him who had bent in agony over her on that fatal night;—to him who had watched her life ebbing slowly away,—it came with a terrible truth; its want of animation rendered it a poor likeness to others,—it was its very deadness that spoke to him. This was the first time he ever beheld the picture. He suddenly stood still, as if the transition from flesh to stone had been the work of an instant.

"Come on," cried Charles, touching his arm.

"Are you ill?" asked Edmund, looking anxiously in his face.

"Go on!" cried Davenport, urging him in the rear. But he stirred not.

In a few moments he spoke. "I will not go further than this:"—and he averted his eyes from the distant dreaded picture.

The party at the rails were all waiting; the party in the middle of the nave were come to a dead standstill; it was evident that while matters continued in this state the object for which they were all assembled could not be accomplished. Charles felt half inclined to swear; Mr Davenport was conscious of a similar tendency; but he curbed himself.

"For heaven's sake, Campbell! what do you mean by acting in this manner? Are you not ashamed to keep her Ladyship standing there so long, at such a time? Will you tell me what your objection to go on *is*?—what it *can* be?"

"I cannot tell you, neither can I nor will I go nearer to that

chancel than I am now,"—and he retreated a yard or two still further back.

"By George! he will bolt completely, if we do not take care," whispered Charles to Edmund.

"And will you consent to be married in this spot?" cried Davenport, actually terrified as to what turn the "state of mind" he had noticed the evening before was going to take.

"Do as you please with me here," answered Campbell.

Davenport saw he was not to be moved, and said in dismay to Mr Routledge—

"What excuse can I possibly give to Lord Northwood for bringing them all back here?"

Then a thought seemed to flash across him, and he brightened up, and walking erect and towering towards the bride and her friends, who were wondering what this energetic debate could be about, he addressed himself to the Earl; Lady Caroline, with drooping head, was trembling on her aunt's arm.

"My lord, it is really most extraordinary—I had no suspicion of it—but Dr Campbell is positively so 'high church,' that he objects to be married anywhere but in 'the body of the church,' as appointed by the rubric. I was insisting on his not being so troublesome to you, but with these kind of people such punctilios are of vital importance, and one hardly likes opposing them—"

Lord Northwood broke in: "Ha! dear, dear! well, really, as you say, I should never have imagined that he was 'high church' either, but as I am the same myself, I cannot blame him; still I never thought about the exact spot where she ought to be married; but now I recollect, my own cousin, the Bishop of —, married his daughter lately himself in the body of the church;—it's all right; come, my love!"

He gave his arm to poor Caroline, who retraced her footsteps, followed by her brother, who, with a look of ineffable contempt, muttered,

"Campbell high church indeed!"

Two cushions were brought for them to kneel on, and the ceremony at last commenced, Campbell keeping his eyes fixed on the ground. When in the carriage on his way to church, he had the precaution to take Milly's ring off his little finger, and slip it into his waistcoat pocket—it would not do to wear it while

he was manipulating Lady Caroline. When they arrived at the words which the bridegroom must say after the clergyman, Campbell, completely upset by the vision of the picture, had so thoroughly forgotten where he was and what he was doing, that he did not say a single word after Davenport.

The latter, knowing his duty of course, was obliged to whisper, "Campbell, I cannot hear you."

"Oh, I forgot!" exclaimed he, wakening as if from a dream; "I had to say something—had I? shall we begin again?"

Such words, we suppose, were never uttered at "the altar" before. The bridesmen and Lord Fitzarthur exchanged glances of amazement; the bridesmaids held down their heads; Davenport, looking deeply annoyed, went on with the words, and Campbell, frightened for a moment into good behaviour, repeated them after him in his captivating tones. If the ladies were vexed with him, he charmed away all their vexation in a minute; but men do not so easily forgive men. And now came the time for the ring to be produced. Again his head grew giddy, as he raised it, and got another glimpse of the distant picture,—he could scarcely see; he fumbled in his waistcoat pocket hurriedly; unwittingly drew out Milly's ring, and presented it to her husband. Davenport turned scarlet, but he hastily snatched the ring off the prayer-book, and thrust it into his pocket. He then said stiffly and coldly:—

"You gave me the wrong ring."

Campbell was horror-struck, but he must make the best of it, and not permit himself to think of the consequences, terrible as they might be;—the point now was to get over the present affair without exposing himself any further; he hoped no one but Davenport had seen that he gave the wrong ring, and perhaps he might not recognize it. He searched hastily in the same pocket and produced the wedding-ring. The ceremony was ended without any further disasters. Davenport omitted the sermon that ends with "amazement:" there certainly had been enough of that element already distributed among the spectators; they did not require the final emphatic utterance of the word to seal the proceedings. The priest closed the book, and bowed without a smile or a word. Lady Caroline, who was trembling violently, but had performed her part with more courage than was expected, rose, and kissed her father, her aunt, and some others. Campbell continued kneeling.

"Get up, man! you're married," whispered Charles Routledge.

Edmund enforced the words by endeavouring to assist him to rise. On this he got upon his feet. He looked around bewildered; he saw "his wife," with her gloves still off, and the wedding-ring on her finger, receiving the congratulations of her friends on all sides.

The parties now adjourned to the vestry-room and signed the necessary documents. Mr Routledge took Charles's place near Campbell; he had been quite uneasy at the manner in which he saw him conducting himself. The business being all concluded, he clapped Campbell on the shoulder, and whispered something to him, on which he went up to his bride and gave her his arm to conduct her back through the church to her carriage. All the rest followed. Mr Davenport walked between Sir Thomas Ffolliott and Mr Routledge; he seemed much dispirited.

"I wish you joy, sir, that your work is over," said Sir Thomas to him; "it seemed a hardish job to get through."

"Thank you, sir," answered he; "your congratulations are very well timed, and I suspect I am the only person in this company that there is much sense in wishing joy to; I am certainly most happy that my job is over, for it was the toughest one I ever had to tug through, and I have done a good many things in that way." Then turning to Mr Routledge: "Did you notice how he stood with the most asinine obstinacy down at the bottom of the church? nothing would get him either to come on, or to tell what motive he had for stopping, and a whole row of titled personages waiting at the chancel to honour him with their alliance! The bride herself, Lady Caroline Fitzarthur; Lord Northwood, Lady Anne Ffolliott, and Lord Fitzarthur!"

He paused, quite awe-struck at Campbell's good fortune, and equally disgusted at the impertinence with which he accepted of the bliss.

"It was a mercy I thought of the high church dodge," continued Davenport, "though, indeed, I had but faint hopes of its success; one would suppose Lord Northwood might know what he is as well as I do."

"And is not he high church?" asked Sir Thomas.

"He has no more religion than a horse," answered Davenport, who seemed suddenly quite hardened against Campbell.

"Poor fellow!" said Mr Routledge; "I cannot account for his strange conduct to-day; but I assure you, Sir Thomas Ffolliott, he has a great many good qualities."

"Probably he has, sir," said Sir Thomas; "a little vivacity would be desirable to bring them out; I thought he would have been taken up asleep off his knees just now."

George Bolton had his little remark to make to Mrs Routledge:

"I did not think it was such a hard thing to be married, ma'am, as I find to-day it is."

"This seems a peculiar case," said she, smiling; "I hope you are not disheartened from making the attempt some time or another."

"Oh! surely not, ma'am," cried he; "with such an incentive to face the difficulty as I see before me!" and he looked on to Fanny, who was following the bride.

They had now arrived at the church-door. The little girls of Mr Purdon's school were waiting at the outside, all dressed alike and holding baskets in their hands; their office was to scatter flowers and laurel-leaves before the bride and bridegroom as they walked to their equipage which was waiting for them at the gate; they were to return alone together in the new barouche-and-four. The procession commenced. Campbell had rallied a little, and led on his bride with a pretty good grace; she, in spite of all that had passed, felt a sensation of deep happiness as she pressed his arm, with the consciousness that he was actually her husband. The present moment between the past and future, like a gossamer-thread, flashed a slender light—but it was all light—ere it was swept into the buried by-gones. She cast her eye again towards the turnstile; the ugly little carriage was in the same place still.

"What can that old vehicle want there?" said she to Campbell; "there does not seem to be any one in it."

He looked in the direction she indicated.

"I cannot imagine for whom it is waiting," he answered.

As he finished speaking the clock in the church-tower began to strike noon. Before they had turned away their heads from the little carriage the door opened, and from it bounded a little girl about six years old; she came in at the turnstile, ran half-way down the walk leading from the stile to the church, then darting into the grass on her right, made a short cut so as to get in front of Campbell and Lady Caroline as they were going down

the slope leading to their carriage. She was exquisitely beautiful, and wore a white frock, a blue silk scarf, and a white satin hat and feathers. She carried a basket of twisted white-and-gold rods, filled with greenhouse flowers. Such a vision of loveliness might well put to the blush Mr Purdon's neat, plain-looking, little flock, with their wicker-baskets and simple garden-flowers, chiefly chrysanthemums. So rapid had been the young stranger's movements that by the time the clock had done striking she was advancing to meet the newly-married pair. The company looked surprised, the school-girls made way for her, she approached Lady Caroline, and presenting the basket to her with the most winning grace, said—"C'est pour maman ;"—and after giving a joyous glance at Dr Campbell, she flew back again to her carriage. Caroline, thinking this was some little surprise her papa had planned for her, received the basket with a smile, but the smile vanished very suddenly when she looked into the child's eyes. So such was the end of the ominous, ugly tumble-down that had inspired the bride with an unaccountable fear ;—certainly it was an ill-looking husk to produce so sweet a kernel. But stay—hush ! what ails the bridegroom ?—The moment the child looked up in his face he tore away his arm from Lady Caroline, made a bound forward as if wishing to seize the former, then staggered back, and striking against the bride and nearly throwing her down, he fell to the earth in a deep swoon. Charles Routledge and Miss Bolton caught the bride, from whose hand the basket fell, scattering its treasures on the ground. The ladies conducted Caroline back to the church, and placed her on a bench near the font ; she was greatly shaken, and began to weep bitterly. Some water was brought to her, which she drank. As to Campbell, he lay like a dead person, in one of those faints to which he was subject, —such as had seized him when he read Mrs Davenport's marriage in the paper. His friends crowded round him. The little carriage, unheeded by every one, rumbled off through the rough lanes. Everything was done to revive Campbell ; his scarf was taken off, his shirt-collar unbuttoned, and great quantities of water were dashed over him. Then they opened his waistcoat, and were proceeding to lay bare his chest.

"Do you mean to strip him naked," cried Mr Davenport, "and drench him with water from head to foot ? I've seen him in such a faint before, and nothing but time will bring him about. If we could get him off the damp ground—"

Then some cushions from one of the carriages were procured, and he was laid on them ; Edmund continued to bathe his temples. Lord Northwood, half-distracted, was flying backwards and forwards between his daughter and Campbell, now comforting her, now inquiring into his condition. Lady Anne, though obliged to stay chiefly with her niece, could not refrain from running occasionally to take an anxious look at the bridegroom's death-like face, beautiful as sculpture in every situation. It was a matter of much curiosity among the party whether it was the appearance of the child that made him faint, and if it was, why it should ! that was a still greater puzzle ;—there were different opinions on the subject.

"No, no ; it was no such thing," said Edmund, who was secretly convinced of the contrary, but did not wish any one else to entertain his suspicions. Then there was a great discussion as to who the child was, and what possible motive there could be for sending her in this manner with a basket to the bride. None of the company, as far as they could judge by the glimpse they had got of her, had seen her before : who she was, or why she was sent, was equally unknown to all. The flowers that had fallen out of the basket when Lady Caroline dropped it were lying strewed about ; one of them caught the eye of Charles Routledge, and he picked it up.

"Ha ! I know where this came from ; there is only one hothouse in the country that can boast of possessing such a plant."

"Well, no matter, my dear, no matter," said his father, who also recognized the flower, but, with a secret impulse that he could not account for, felt most anxious that its owner should not be named. That flower had bloomed in the hothouse of Sunville.

Meantime the ladies were growing uneasy about the bride ; Lady Anne and Miss Bolton said she ought to be taken home, that she would certainly catch cold sitting so long in the church without any fire, and in such light clothing.

"Besides," said Mr Davenport, "Campbell will not recover probably before night, so we had better lift him at once into one of the carriages ; he was ten hours at least in the faint I remember seeing him in."

This was cheering news. Poor Lord Northwood felt wretched : must he return to his household, and to a number of his tenants whom he had invited to spend the day in his demesne, and regale themselves with ale and other good things, and for whom he had

erected some marquees on the lawn opposite to the hall-door, and who were waiting to receive him and his family on their arrival from church with cheers and rejoicings,—must he return indeed to them bringing back his daughter alarmed, trembling, weeping, and his newly-made son-in-law not different from a corpse?—Well, things were not to be quite so bad. While they were deliberating Campbell suddenly opened his eyes.

"Oh, thank God!" cried Gordon and a few of the men-servants who had been some time in the family, and who were all anxiously watching him. Edmund, on whose knees his head was lying, drew a long breath.

"Do not say anything to him yet," said he, "let him speak first himself."

Campbell looked round: "Where is she?" were his first words.

"Ah, my poor fellow!" said the Earl: "she is safe in the church; a little uneasy, of course, and very low; but she will get quite brisk when she hears you have recovered," and he set off with the good news.

"In the church!" repeated Campbell, not having heeded the rest of the speech. He then made an effort to rise as if to go thither.

"Quietly, sir, quietly," said Edmund, "you are not able to stand up yet."

Then he bent down and whispered in his ear: "Lord Northwood means Lady Caroline only."

Campbell, hearing this, directly lay down again.

"Where is the child?" he then asked in a very low voice.

"Gone away in the carriage that she came in," said Edmund.

After a little time Dr Campbell got on his feet with the assistance of his friends, and said he was ready to return to the Abbey. The bride was brought from the church, but her husband was in a strange condition to receive her. They began to make some attempt to arrange his dress and put on his hat, but he told them to desist, and take him back as fast as possible. He was not a fit figure to be in the carriage with Lady Caroline, but she refused to depart from the intended plan. So it was settled they should go together in the barouche, but not alone, as he might faint again; he still looked very ghastly. In the barouche then Mr Davenport and Edmund placed him, and took their seat, one at each side of him; Lady Caroline attended by Sarah sat oppo-

site to them, and they drove off at a tremendous rate, by Campbell's directions. The rest of the party followed at a more sober pace.

"Well," observed Sir Thomas, as George Bolton was assisting him into his carriage, "of all the weddings I was ever at, this 'flogs for drollness,' as the fellows in my country say."

"Don't you mean 'dullness,' sir?" asked George.

"No, indeed, my man," answered he; "but we give the word I have used a different meaning from what you do."

The worthy baronet was destined to see "droller" things still.

Campbell kept his eyes closed and his head on Edmund's shoulder during the drive home, which did not take long.

The gallant equipage, with its splendid horses, its superb liveries, and flowing white bridal favours, swept in at the gate and dashed up the old ancestral avenue.

The rustic guests, dressed in their best clothes, were enjoying their holiday. Some were strolling about the shrubberies, for the weather, at any rate, was propitious; the elder men were sitting in the marquees, enjoying cakes and ale and a pipe. A number were assembled on each side of the steps to greet the noble young lady and her chosen husband; little they cared about his rank, he was now the rising sun, and an object of general homage. There was a loud cheer when "the grand coach" came in sight which they had been told was to bring the newly-wedded pair. The postilion on the leaders waved his arm, as if deprecating a too emphatic welcome. Then there was a kind of lull—an animated expectation. The carriage stopped.

"The bridegroom will come out first, and then he will hand the bride."

These words were whispered round. The door was opened, and Mr Davenport jumped out. This was a disappointment, of course, but still they were determined to be pleased, and besides, Mr Davenport was very popular in the neighbourhood.

"He is a grand gentleman, and a good gentleman;—hurrah for the friend of the poor, and the man who has a kind word and a pleasant look for every one!"

The Vicar of Northwood was loudly cheered. He bowed, and thanked them; but there was a dullness in his manner not usual with him at any time, nor at all consistent with the occasion.

"Now comes the bridegroom!"

But the next person who stepped out was Edmund Bolton.

He was very young ; not much was known about him as yet, and he was received in silence.

“ Will the bridegroom never come ? ”

Have patience, my friends, he is coming next ;—and next he came. Mr Davenport and Edmund each put in an arm to help him ; slowly he came, but in good time he appeared. Gracious heavens ! what has befallen him ? His coat and trousers are all dirtied with moist clay and sand, from his having been lying so long on the damp ground ; his thick hair is thoroughly wet and matted with the floods of water that were poured over his face and head. His face is white, and smutted, and shining with the moisture that had dried on it without being rubbed off. His scarf is gone—Lord knows whither ! His shirt is open, crumpled, and soiled ; his throat is naked. In this guise he hurried up the steps and into the house, supported on each side by his two friends. A silence prevailed as dead as what we notice in well-conducted churches between the last word of the blessing and the rising of the congregation.

And where is the bride ? Is she drowned ? Has she fallen into the river that murmurs beneath the ash-trees, and is he reduced to this state after having vainly endeavoured to save her ? Do not be so apprehensive ; the bride will come out too. But Miss Bolton comes first, and then assists her out. Her dress is in perfect order—she has not met with any accident ; but her face—it is very pale, and expresses deep dejection : the most unrefined observer must perceive that to cheer her would be a mockery of the most unfeeling character. Under a respectful silence she passed into the hall, leaning on her companion, with downcast eyes and bending head ; and as her magnificent silver-embossed skirt and delicate satin slipper receded from their view a murmur of deep and honest pity from the hardy tribe clad in homespun and shod with hobnailed shoes followed her departure. She was taken to her dressing-room by Sarah, disencumbered of a good deal of her finery, and laid on her couch.

Mr Davenport and Edmund inquired for the housemaid, and begged of her to show them into some spare bed-room, where Dr Campbell might lie down for a while. After considering, she said that the north green-room was at their disposal, and thither he was conducted, followed by his trunks. He took off his soiled, wet things, and threw himself on the bed. Edmund, by his directions, dried his hair, and got him out other clothes. Daven-

port sat silently in the window. In a little time Campbell got up and began to dress himself.

"You ought to rest a little longer, sir," said Edmund.

"I cannot; I have something very important to do," he answered. "And now you may go down for a while."

Edmund departed.

"Davenport," said Campbell, "I want your assistance in a most distressing case."

"Very well," answered Davenport, "I will attend to you with pleasure, if you will first tell me how you came by that ring you put by mistake on the prayer-book."

"Mrs Davenport gave it to me."

"She did! a ring I gave her a little before we were married, and after we were engaged! And when did she give it to you? It was on her finger at breakfast yesterday."

"She gave it to me in the afternoon, when I called to see her."

"So you were with her, and took leave of her previously, though that was what you were by way of coming to do last night."

"You told me that was what I wanted; I never told you such a thing; I simply asked where she was; I had something to say that I forgot when I called before."

"It was odd that when I offered to take her your adieus you did not mention that you had already made them in person."

"I was never in the habit of giving you an account of every time I called. I have been with her three times a-day sometimes, when she was delicate, without your either knowing or caring—whatever makes you so particular now."

"I am particular because I think she did wrong in giving you that ring."

"I have got little presents twenty times from ladies whose children I have been useful to, and no offence taken on the part of their husbands."

"So you may; there are different kinds of presents; if she worked you a pair of slippers, or knit you a purse, I should not wonder; but to give you a ring! her own woman's ring—the gift of her betrothed lover! that showed very singular regard for you, or very little affection for me, and in either case I have a right to feel extremely uncomfortable."

"She expected I would attend her no more, and she had nothing else at hand to give me."

"She was very precipitate with her gratitude;—she might have sent you something more suitable afterwards. When you were speaking to me last night you seemed to have very little idea of giving up attending our family."

"Notwithstanding," persisted Campbell, "it was her conviction that my engagements here would quite prevent it—she said so, and gave me the ring as a parting gift. I have known her since she was seven years old, and it is not surprising that she should have so much regard for me as to make me that small present when she considered that our intercourse was going to cease."

"I told you before," cried Davenport, much excited, "that there is a vast difference between presents: there is something very significant in a ring—a ring of any kind; and—it was very strange you did not tell me you had taken leave of her;—and—she had something on her mind—I know she had;—what did she mean by telling me she did not deserve that I should kiss her?"

"How the devil can I tell?" cried Campbell, losing his temper as usual, poor fellow! yet making a very good fight, considering how his conscience must have been twitching him; "how do I know what you may have tutored her into thinking would render her unworthy of your 'kisses'? Perhaps she omitted reading the psalms and lessons for the afternoon, which you might have desired her to have done against you returned. This is a mere conjecture which I make, not to appear disobliging."

Davenport was silent for a few moments, evidently striving to bring his wrath under the dominion of reason and prudence. Then he said:—

"As to your opinions, and the levity with which you speak on certain subjects, I have nothing to do. Still I often thought it very uncourteous of you to speak as you did on important matters in presence of me, a clergyman. What you have just said, however, I look upon as a personal taunt, and yet, viewing it in that light even, I am content to pass it over. There are strong motives why I should wish to part from you with as little acerbity as possible. Do not suppose that I am not grateful to you for the devoted attention you have paid my family for years. As to a token of esteem and thankfulness—I should not think a dinner-service of plate too much if I could afford to give it. But there are some things a man can never be grateful with, and one is, the affections of his wife. I have often noticed she enjoyed your

company twice as much as she did mine : in every way you seemed to please her more, and she has been in a wretched state ever since she heard you were going to be married. I cannot shut my eyes to it. However, you are married now, and your own wife ought to occupy your undivided attention. Whether she will or not I cannot tell, but one thing I can lay down as a decided point, and that is, my wife shall not come between you and your duty to Lady Caroline, neither shall you distract her from her loyalty to me. I wish you clearly to understand that your attendance at my house as a physician is over for ever. I thank you from my heart for all your kindness and skill exercised in my favour : as to present of any kind, I offer you nothing ; no doubt you would now scorn it. Whenever you are good enough to call at my humble dwelling, accompanied by your wife, Lady Caroline Campbell, I shall be happy to see you—but on those terms only. But if you ever come alone to visit Mrs Davenport, I— ”

“ You may spare yourself the pain of any threats,” interrupted Campbell, “ or any harsh language, suggestive of kicks, and other such disagreeable extremes, necessary at times, no doubt. It is not my intention to go about the country lolling in a coach, paying morning visits with my wife ; neither need you purchase a whip or set a mantrap wherewith to receive me on any other occasion, for I have never yet been known to obtrude myself on any house without the express desire of the master of the mansion.”

“ Very well,” said Davenport ; “ I will take back her ring to Mrs Davenport, and advise her to be more judicious in future with regard to the character of her gifts. What are you wishing to say to me ? ”

“ Nothing now,” answered Campbell, “ only that if you deal harshly with Mrs Davenport respecting that miserable ring, you may cost her her life ; her situation is very delicate.”

“ I know the situation she is in very well,” answered he, “ and I trust I am not such a bungler but that I can give her a hint of what her duty is, without running any risk of destroying her life.”

He then went down-stairs. Campbell threw himself on the bed in an agony of despair. Misfortunes were coming so thick on him that he did not know which to look first in the face. It was all up between him and Milly ; they were found out at last. Found out ! that was too hard an expression, they had been committing no sin ;—not acting quite right certainly, but Davenport had al-

ways given them so much encouragement and such opportunities, that one would have almost thought he did it on purpose. That, however, was far from being the case. Mr Davenport had a noble, unsuspecting, trusting nature, but when his fears were once awakened, his keen eye examined a subject in all its bearings, and if the circumstantial evidence satisfied him, plausible excuses, subterfuges, or what might be even called a fair case for the defendant, had very little effect when his convictions were once established. The affair of the ring had now arrested his attention, added of course to Amelia's mysterious rejection of his caresses, and many other things that had no weight before, but now told with peculiar significance. It was no wonder that he ordered Campbell to give up visiting at the Vicarage except when accompanied by his wife, and it was only amazing that he acted with so much mildness and forbearance. His proofs were not certainly very numerous nor very strong, and while satisfied that his wife was perfectly free from guilt, he was full sure that her feelings towards her physician and the companion of her childhood were far too tender, and that she had gradually acquired a distaste for himself. But then there were so many favourable circumstances come to his assistance that it seemed unnecessary for him to act with a severity alien to his nature. If he had discovered the flirtation, or whatever it was to be called, while Campbell had no idea of marrying, was residing in his cottage, and going on with his practice, the separation would have had to be effected by the most stringent measures—measures perhaps scarcely practicable;—but no;—there was no such word as impracticable in Davenport's vocabulary when his energies were once roused into action;—the world might look astounded at the sudden and fearful breach, but he would win the day. Now, however, there was no need of this course; the profession was given up, the residence changed, the life of the disturber of his peace was now tied down to that of another, and Lord Northwood would be vigilant enough to see that his daughter's husband devoted himself as he ought to her enjoyments and happiness. With these sentiments then he had opened the conversation just related; he did not expect it would have ended in the complete breach that Campbell had made; he thought he could have destroyed the intimacy between his wife and his physician and yet have remained on good terms with Lord Northwood's family, including his son-in-law; of all things he did not wish to lose the acquaintance of the noble in-

habitants of Northwood Abbey, and if Campbell and he were not to be on speaking terms, it would be hard to keep it up; but, in commencing a game we generally reckon on gaining more points than we do: who can see half the bearings of his case, or calculate on the changes to be wrought by the passions of others?

Meantime the wretched Campbell was writhing in his agony. Did it not seem like a Nemesis? The ring that she had slipped on his finger after he had kissed her too warmly and too long,—that very ring he himself in his agitation had handed to her husband, thus becoming his own accuser—and thus by himself condemned. And poor Milly was not giving him the ring either, she was only lending it as usual, after having magnetized it; he was to give it back when he returned from St Leonard's, and perhaps would not have asked for it again; but none of this work could be told to the husband; it was better even to let him suppose it a gift. Be things as they may, it was all up between him and Milly; a thought so terrible that it required a far more terrible one to banish it from his mind for a single instant, and that, too, there was. The child who had suddenly appeared before the wedding party and produced such an effect on him—who was she? Perhaps the reader has guessed that she was his own child—the offspring of him and Anne Purdon. It was a sad affair that cannot be enlarged upon. It has been intimated that Miss Purdon, forgetting any childish affection she might have had for Julius Livingstone, became wildly attached to Campbell, though she knew her father was resolved she should marry her cousin. We have already told that Campbell did his best to discourage her and remind her of her engagement. One summer's day he dined at the rectory, and in the evening Mr Purdon was summoned to a sick person; and when Campbell was departing shortly afterwards, she insisted on walking part of the way home with him in spite of his remonstrances. In her wildness, her mirth, her madness, she led him on through the thickets and labyrinths of the Hill of Cones, he being obliged to follow her lest she should be lost in the wood in the approaching twilight,—and at last her blandishments were too much for him.

She was of that age to men the most enchanting, between sixteen and seventeen, and she seemed younger than she was; she had those beguiling and captivating manners, between the child's and the woman's, with all the wild playfulness and waywardness of the former, and some of the deep, tender feelings of

the latter. Campbell was then only about seven and twenty. Her idolatry for him was a mixture of worship, respect, and love, which led her at one time to sit at his feet on her little stool and gaze up into his face as if he was a god : at another, to take counsel with him, ask for his guidance, and demurely obey him ; at another, to pour forth to him such language as the flowing locks, innocent ringing laugh, and scarcely developed beauty of early girlhood might excuse, but which the heart and emotions of a woman alone could suggest. She was not as innocent as she seemed. But we do not seek to defend him. If human nature, without Divine assistance, could have resisted, he should have done so, and he did not. And she was the only joy and hope of the man to whom he owed—what a rare benevolence lays it on very few indeed in this hard world to owe. Let him bear the righteous verdict of earth's minority—of the few who, in the hour of fiercest temptation, escape without a fall.

The unhappy Anne Purdon, sometimes almost insane in her anguish, succeeded in concealing her situation from every human eye. From Campbell she seemed to shrink with particular terror ; and he, professionally keen in every ordinary case, now when he himself was concerned, and when a conviction of the fact would have been poison to his blood and madness to his brain, dreading, doubting, fearing, hoping, finally ended in persuading himself that all was safe and well. When her agony came on, Miss Purdon fled to Mrs Ford's cottage, and in her hour of trial was attended by Nannie alone. Campbell was dining somewhere. When he returned home at night Higgin was waiting for him at Cypress Cottage, and when he was brought to Mrs Ford's late in the night he found his child in the old woman's arms. Miss Purdon was going on well, and if her unconscious father had let her remain quiet for twenty-four hours longer than when he insisted on her return home, there would have been no doubt of her recovery. But he acted right according to his knowledge ; and, perhaps, she was saved from a world of misery and exposure. The infant was carried off by Higgin to his farm-house near Sunville, and given in charge to his female servant, and for the consideration of a sum in hand, and the twenty pounds a-year which he had lately resigned, he was pledged to keep the secret, and satisfied to bear from his servant the imputation of being its father. Since the child had been eighteen months old she had been residing with an English

family in Avranches, whom her father had known intimately in London; they were poor, and for the handsome allowance he made them were happy to take charge of his child. This little girl, then, Campbell adored; she shared his heart with Milly, and well Milly knew of her existence, for he had told her all about it two years after the occurrence, and she made every allowance for the temptation to which he had been subjected. Once a-year Campbell went to visit his daughter; he had gone to her when he left the country the day after Miss Neville's ball. He had no other idea but that she was safe with her protectors, when she so unaccountably started up before him this morning. Who could have torn her away from her distant home, and so cruelly thrust her forward at that peculiar moment? It was with no friendly intention such an act was done; nay, it was rather the work of some secret, bitter enemy. But who that enemy could be, and what his motive for thus persecuting him, was beyond the reach of any conjecture he could make. All he felt certain of was, that he was the object of some diabolical conspiracy: the production of the child was the beginning of it. But he must not lose another moment of time, his precious darling was in the hands of his enemies, and who could tell what might happen to her? Except Mrs Ford, Higgin alone knew the place of her residence, so he must have been deep in the plot of stealing her away. Now his plan was to go with all speed to Higgin's house, and never leave it until he compelled him to give up the child or tell where she was to be found. But he must get away privately, and have some confidant in the house who should pretend that he was still very poorly and gone to bed, and this pretence would have to be kept up until he returned, some time in the evening, he hoped. He had intended to admit Davenport to a half-confidence, and to request of him to carry on the feint, but the angry manner in which he had taken up the affair of the ring had destroyed all friendship between them. Now Edmund was his sole dependence, and he must tell him more than he wished. If he recovered the child he settled that he would leave her in Rachel's care till he returned from St Leonard's. The search and the recovery might take a long time, but he would perish sooner than go away for a fortnight to-morrow and leave her with—he knew not whom. He might not be back till supper-time, but even so, if he could steal secretly up to his room, and if Edmund played his part well during the day, and kept every one from

going up to see him, it might be carried through ; but how difficult for a creature in Edmund's position to manage such a ticklish affair ! How could he dare to resist Lord Northwood, should he insist on going up to visit his son-in-law ? He was almost distracted.

We must leave him for the present, preparing for his desperate and almost impracticable expedition, and return to our other friends.

When Edmund came down-stairs after Campbell had told him he might leave him, he found most of the party assembled in the drawing-room. About the same time Sarah came in too, having left Lady Caroline in the care of Elpsley. Every one crowded round them to learn some news of their interesting charges.

"How is the bride ?" "How is the bridegroom ?" saluted their ears from all sides.

Edmund replied modestly ; "Dr Campbell is better, thank you ; he has lain down to rest in the north green-room."

Poor youth ! he was not accustomed to bed-rooms with names, and this one had made some little impression on him.

"And Lady Caroline ?" said three or four ladies anxiously to Sarah.

"She is rather fatigued," answered Sarah, "but I hope she will soon come down ; I left her lying quietly on a sofa."

"In the south white-room, I suppose," said George, looking as innocent as he could.

"I believe it is south," said Sarah, in her usual matter-of-fact way, "for the sun is shining in very pleasantly on her."

"Well," observed Sir Thomas, "by all accounts their situation is highly satisfactory ; he gone to bed in the north green-room—she in the south white-room ; what happier conclusion could any one wish for, after the marriage ceremony ?"

"Sir Thomas," cried Lady Anne, "if you are going to be either unfeeling or coarse, under these distressing circumstances—"

"My dear," interrupted he, "I have not the slightest inclination either way ; the pleasing natural current of events is going on so well that it leaves very little scope for any commentary or any attempt at improvement.

Here the lord of the mansion entered, who, it may be judged, was not present when the above little scene took place.

"Ho, ha! all assembled," he said, in his nervous manner; "but, how? Caroline not here!" addressing himself to his sister.

Sarah answered for the bride, that she would soon be down; just resting a little after her fright.

The Earl continued. "And Campbell, eh? I suppose he has to change his dress; not unable to come down, I trust?"

Edmund vouched for him that he was changing his clothes; he could not say much more.

"And have you found out, my young friend, what it was that overpowered him so much?"

Edmund, who had previously some vague suspicions, in consequence of various conversations with Mrs Ford, and whose quick eye had detected a likeness to Campbell in the liquid glance of the child's eye as she raised it, answered cautiously:—

"He was not well yesterday, my Lord, and he was greatly hurried and tired; and then the agitation of the ceremony quite upset him; that was all, he said."

This falsehood was brought out with difficulty; poor Edmund was only a beginner.

"Yes, yes, I know he is nervous!" said the Earl, who was fond of extending his own nervousness to other people, "and he is exceedingly sensitive too; he will make the kinder husband for that."

Here Mr Davenport entered, after having just given the *coup de grace* to the intimacy between Campbell and his wife.

"Ho! Mr Davenport," cried Lord Northwood, "I am glad to see you; is our friend coming down? I am only waiting for the hero and heroine of the day to show Mrs Routledge the way to the *déjeuner*."

"Indeed, my Lord, I cannot tell what his intentions are; if you please I will send Mr Edmund Bolton to say you are waiting."

"I think so; yes: and, Miss Bolton, perhaps you will have the kindness to press my daughter to exert herself; I think you have more influence over her than any of us."

The brother and sister departed on their separate errands, probably both beginning to wish they were at home with their father and poor Quill. As to Lucy, she was greatly frightened and damped by the accident in the churchyard; she thought it was curious, but whenever she expected a day of unmixed en-

joyment at the Abbey, Dr Campbell was sure to dash it in some way.

Campbell gave a start when the door of his room opened, but was relieved by seeing Edmund.

"Oh, you are just the person I wanted; my dear Edmund,—I have something to say to you."

He fell back in his chair, apparently gasping for breath. Edmund looked at him solicitously.

"Are you able to go down to the *déjeuner*? They sent me to say they were waiting."

"Oh mercy! no. Go and say I am quite unfit;—very weak with a great palpitation; but if I am let lie quiet—no one to come near me—I hope to be better at dinner-time. Come back the moment you give that answer."

Edmund returned to the drawing-room with his message, which was received with great dismay. He then hurried back to Campbell as requested, and just at the door of his room he met the footman with a note in his hand, which he said a lad had just brought, requesting it might be delivered to the doctor immediately, and an answer returned. Edmund took the note in to Campbell, who forthwith read it. That note contained matter of no ordinary importance, as Edmund could plainly see by the expression of his face as he perused it. He read and re-read it. Then he put his hand to his forehead and seemed in deep thought. Then he rose and began to pace up and down the room. What would poor Edmund not have given to learn the contents of that small piece of paper? A quarter of an hour passed in silence on both sides. Then Campbell said: "I suppose the messenger is in haste for an answer."

"I do not know, sir; shall I inquire?"

"Yes; and just ask him what kind of a person gave him this note."

Edmund went down and soon returned.

"He is desirous of an answer as soon as possible; he is a lad belonging to the Elephant Inn; he was called into the parlour there, and a young man whom he had never seen before gave him the note and told him he would pay him handsomely when he brought the answer; the stranger had fair curling hair and a good complexion; he could not give me any further information."

"Come then," said Campbell, with a firm, resolute look about

his mouth, while his cheek was bloodless. He took out his writing-case, wrote about two lines, and putting the paper into an envelope gave it to Edmund, and desired him to deliver it himself to the messenger. Edmund having done so returned, and asked him whether he could do anything more for him.

"No, not at present ; I thank you very much for the trouble you have already taken for me : go down now and partake of whatever festivities are going forward."

"I fear there will not be much festivity without you, sir."

"Say I am gone to rest till dinner-time," said Campbell hastily.

The young man went away in sorrow ; he saw there was something gnawing at his beloved master's core that no wealth, no connections, no earthly honours could cure.

Campbell had apparently given up all intention of going in search of his daughter. As soon as Edmund was gone he locked the door, took off his boots and coat, put on a dressing-gown and slippers, sat down to the table, and wrote diligently for an hour. He then carefully sealed up his written papers, and having put away his writing-case into his trunk, he closed the window-shutters and lay down in the bed.

Edmund, on returning to the drawing-room, found the bride there. She was in her magnificent wedding-robe, divested of her white satin mantelette and bonnet ; her fair hair was hanging in ringlets on each side of her face, and her head was encircled with a simple wreath of orange-flowers that her aunt had insisted on putting on. Her cheeks had a little flush in them now—an accident that improved her features extremely, and Edmund, on beholding her, thought he had never seen so exquisitely refined and interesting-looking a creature. Considering his youth, it was almost strange that a sharp pang of grief was the first emotion that passed through his heart after he had admired her appearance. True, he was just come from the presence of a man who seemed very unlike a bridegroom indeed : still he was better, and promised to be down to dinner : but before the thunder-storm explodes there is something in the air we breathe oppressive and unwholesome, that forebodes its coming ; so with Edmund, the arrival of the note, and Campbell's look and manner when reading and answering it, seemed ominous of some great catastrophe. On seeing the pupil Lord Northwood made one attempt more.

"Is Dr Campbell quite unable to join us, my dear Bolton?"

"He regrets much that he is, my Lord."

There was nothing for it but to go in to the *déjeuner* without him, which they did. It was exquisitely chaste and beautiful; the housekeeper and her staff had certainly done their part well. The grand wedding-cake in the middle of the table was the only article on which their skill had not been tried; for it had been brought from London by Lady Anne, and was a triumphant instance that her taste in the glittering and elegant adornments of life was equal to the insight she professed having into its serious essence. Lady Caroline could not keep the tears out of her eyes; she pretended to eat a jelly. The ceremonies were gone through; the cake was cut up; the healths of the bride and the absent bridegroom were drunk, but there was none to respond. Lord Northwood, ever polite, chatted to Mrs Routledge; Sir Thomas attempted some jokes with the bridesmaids; George Bolton was happy, sitting by Fanny; the other gentlemen talked a little to one another; and as the champagne and other choice wines circled, the animal spirits were unavoidably excited, and the hum rose a little louder, and the laugh rang a little more joyously; but still on every breast was a weight, more or less—for the bridegroom was lying ill in the "north green-chamber," and the bride had tears in her eyes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HE VANISHES.

"Abiit, evasit, excessit, erupit."—CICERO.

"Eumenides stravere torum."—OVID.

AFTER the *déjeuner* was ended, it became a matter of debate how the remainder of this awkward day was to be spent. However, as the weather was very favourable, and as there was much within the demesne worth seeing, Lord Fitzarthur proposed to conduct his young guests over the greenhouses, conservatories,

and gardens, which were all furnished with a variety of choice plants and flowers, and in the finest order : he would then take them to Sans Souci, where they could amuse themselves for any length of time, and so he hoped to keep matters astir till dinner, when Campbell would, no doubt, be recovered, and able to come down, and the chill occasioned by his fainting would be all forgotten ; why make a needless rout about a little mishap ? Lady Caroline could not, of course, join in the walk, much exercise on foot had been latterly prohibited to her, and she gladly retired again to her dressing-room, attended by Sarah. She lay down on the sofa.

"I feel very easy and tranquil, Sarah," said she.

Sarah expressed her pleasure at hearing so ; she expected it would be quite otherwise.

"Yes," she continued, "I am sensible of a strange kind of indifference to all the things of this world, which you may wonder at when I am apparently on the verge of beginning a deeper, more active life, and one in which all the emotions of the heart are to be called into strongest play. But for me that life now possesses no reality, it is floating away, away from me,—I smile that I ever thought it within my grasp."

"My dear Caroline," said Sarah, "these are sad feelings to indulge in without any foundation ; there is nothing at all serious the matter with Dr Campbell. He has had a fainting fit of a much worse character than this, and it left no bad effects ; he will be himself again in the evening."

"I do not imagine him dangerously ill ; I do not say it is any positive evil that has happened which makes me feel as I do, raised, as it were, to a calm height, from which I now smile down on all the desires and fancies that used to agitate me, and occupy all my faculties ;—not but that I am as much attached to Dr Campbell as ever I was ; I love him with all my soul,—" and her eyes became fixed on the ring that he had placed on her finger ; —"but I have a conviction that he was never made for me, and indeed I am sure he never loved me nor wished for me, and now I feel ashamed—I despise myself, for that I, in such a headstrong manner, persisted in seizing on what was never intended to fall to my lot. God made me for himself, and not for earthly idols ; I shall soon be all his."

"We can belong to God," said Sarah, "and yet fulfil our natural calling on earth ; what makes such awful schisms in society is, that one half of the world thinks it cannot serve God without

renouncing the delights for which the human heart craves ; the other half casts off all allegiance to its Maker, because it fears that such allegiance is incompatible with some of our noblest earthly pursuits. You will love your husband and your God both, and spend your life in the effort to please your earthly master, without being obliged to fail in your duty to your heavenly one."

"I don't say that the two aims are inconsistent," answered Caroline, "but I have a strong, undefinable feeling that he was never designed for me, in spite of the lengths to which matters have come : when that beautiful little child flashed before me, a persuasion came over me that she was a cherub, come to call him away to heaven ; I actually seemed to see the ugly little black carriage changing into a chariot of fire, and carrying them both aloft : I wondered when, with my natural eyes, I saw him prostrate on the ground,—and her—gone, vanished. But I fancy it is not over yet ; he is hers, and not mine."

"Caroline," said Sarah, "I was obliged to give you a draught early this morning that contained a great deal of morphine ; it has a peculiar effect in producing visions and strange sensations in the head ; to it we must attribute these morbid fancies, but yet the will has power to check them ; do not indulge in them, I beg of you."

"No, no : I often took morphine before, and it did not produce these—wild dreams you call them, doubtless. But what you call raving, ecstasy,—is with me a return to sober, sad reason. He is not mine,—we are sundered, disunited,—no, we were never united—for that three wills would be required,—mine—his—God's,—and there was only mine. Poor weak creature ! I found him a magnet that I could not resist, he drew me to him, and I thought it would be well to go up the thorny path of life with him, and he was to turn it all to flowers. I thought a great many foolish things,—foolish, because they did not contemplate any will in existence but my own. Now, however, I see that he was against this dream, and Heaven was against it, and I have been taught at last where to lay my will and my desires,—before Him who disposes of us all ! . . . Sarah, the child's eyes were very like his."

"Is it possible ?" cried Sarah, while a conviction of what she had long suspected flashed across her.

"Oh, yes," continued Caroline, "as like as possible, and

when she looked up at him for two or three seconds and their eyes met, they both looked so celestial! If the Indian with a strong party of Sikhs had rushed on us, I could not have been more certain of losing him;—I saw that she was a part of himself, as it were, come to call him away. And indeed, when he fell, I thought he was dead,—I was surprised when they told me he had revived."

"Caroline," said Sarah, earnestly, "I strongly recommend to you not to speak of that child, or the incident in any way, to Dr Campbell hereafter."

"Speak of it to him!" repeated Caroline, with a peculiar smile.

Sarah became more emphatic.

"I assure you it would be far better for you both that you should forget it all."

"Ah, my sweet Sarah, how straightforward, and consecutive, and mundane you are! and I am intent on celestial things. . . . When and where should I be able to speak to him about these things? That little angel was dropped from heaven, to guide him up the golden stairs, and he will soon ascend;—where do you suppose I would take my stand to demand of him who she is? I will stay in my place until some messenger comes for me too,—severely chastened, but purified."

She closed her eyes, and appeared to be resting. Sarah was greatly affected; still she did not know how much of this state she was to attribute to a presentiment of a coming fatality, which Heaven sometimes seems marvellously to send—or how much to the morphine—or how much to the dream the night before, and Campbell's fainting fit to-day. She had suddenly ceased to be the pettish, narrow-minded person, who seemed to think everything was made for her, and ought to be constituted according to the type and pattern she prescribed, or at least expected;—she appeared so humbled, so castigated, and from the castigation to have emerged a resigned, exalted, God-loving creature.

When they were dressing her in the morning, she was quite stupid, and did not speak; then Dr Campbell had given her a stimulant before she went to church; Sarah began to think her brain was well nigh disordered by this quick succession of powerful drugs; she went away and desired Elpsley to keep her very quiet until dinner-time, and she had the gratification of be-

ing told shortly after by the waiting-woman that "her Ladyship was asleep."

Sarah then went to rest for awhile in her own room, for she had had a harassing night and an agitated day. She began to meditate. If this regeneration on the part of Caroline lasted, what a surprise and joy it would be to Dr Campbell! But then there was this singular feature about it, that it seemed produced by a persuasion that she and her newly-made husband were going to be parted for ever! Indeed it looked like the result of second sight,—this beatified state,—this spring into a new creature, after years of mismanagement and self-indulgence. The sudden flash did not portend a rational, sensible future, to be spent according to the laws of duty, conjugal requirements, and with continual sacrifices and concessions to another's wishes. No : nature and reason will vindicate their rights : it was not on a basis of mutual regard and kindred minds that the engagement was formed, and it would never be carried out on high, solid, and lasting grounds. Caroline's words were like the notes of the dying swan,—to meet their echo in some other sphere, but not available for any purposes of this earth. So Sarah, notwithstanding her unimaginative nature, which in general rigidly demanded clear cause and effect to produce conviction, felt almost certain that this gloomy, ill-assorted union would, somehow or other, find its termination on this eventful day to which it owed its commencement.

Lord Fitzarthur, assisted by Charles and George (Edmund preferred remaining alone in the library), brought his ladies most successfully through the day, and they came in from their excursion much pleased with what they saw, and quite charmed with their young host. They were shown into a private apartment to arrange their dress, and Sarah, rousing from her reverie, went to inquire into the state of the bride ; she found her refreshed, composed, and ready to make her toilet.

Edmund, at Lord Northwood's request, went to Dr Campbell's chamber, to announce the approach of dinner, and to hope he was well enough to gratify his friends by his appearance. Campbell unlocked the door on hearing Edmund's voice.

"Oh yes," he said in answer to the inquiries, "I am pretty well ; I will go down to dinner."

Edmund brightened. When Campbell had finished dressing

he took up the sealed packet that was on the table, and gave it to Edmund :

"Take this home with you and read it to-morrow—that is, if I do not go to St Leonard's."

Edmund looked puzzled.

"If you do *not* go, sir ?"

"Yes ; you must not seek to understand anything below the surface at present : but what I have said, you comprehend ?"

"Yes, sir."

"Omit not to do it then ; come, let us go down."

They descended by the back stairs, entered the hall, and met the bride and Sarah coming in by another door from the front staircase. Caroline and Campbell drew near and mutually inquired for one another.

He was "better," she was "quite well."

"Will you take my arm ?" he said to her.

She took it in silence.

"Edmund, conduct your sister."

And so they went in. A murmur of satisfaction ran through the company on seeing them thus entering together. The Earl was delighted : he shook hands cordially with Campbell.

"My dear son, I am most happy to see you recovered ; now everything is as it should be:" and he patted the bride on the cheek.

Campbell led her to the sofa near the fire. Mr Davenport was standing on the rug talking to Sir Thomas. The quondam friends looked at one another, but neither spoke. Campbell turned away with a slight smile. The lip that was still quivering with the effect of the wife's kisses could yet venture to curl scornfully at the coldness of the man who could so soon forget years of friendship, and pronounce a hasty decision on the precarious testimony of a suspiciously found ring. Davenport might have a very good right to turn him out, but not for anything he had seen or discovered.

Dinner was announced. Lord Northwood took Mrs Routledge, saying playfully and archly to Campbell,—

"You will take Lady Caroline Campbell."

She started and felt very strangely ; his name joined to hers went to her heart like a bullet, as the word "Robert" had gone to his the day she addressed him by it. From sheer bewilder-

ment, she took his arm before he had time to offer it ; the bridesmaids laughed, and they all went in.

After dinner the Earl and all the company drank health and happiness to the bride and bridegroom.

Some response was expected from Campbell, and he did not fail to make it.

"My Lord, I return my sincere thanks to you and the rest of the company for your warm wishes in behalf of myself and Lady Caroline. All I can say is, that my life has been one of many sorrows, but this evening has brought them at last to a final termination."

This calm, oracular, decisive sentence sounded strangely unlike the eager, sanguine, yet still somewhat qualified language with which those who are on the eve of a great joy look forward to its permanent continuance.

Sorrow was condemned to death absolutely, but no new birth of bliss was proclaimed ; no hope of a happy future, with a pious allusion to the chequered nature of all mortal enjoyment, was included in the speech ; there was neither trust nor fear, yet no fault could be found with his words, though they chilled every one ; nay, the noble family into whose bosom he had been received ought to deem themselves flattered, for the co-existence of sorrow with his new connection had been pronounced impossible.

He sat opposite to Mr Davenport and Edmund ; when he ceased to speak the blue eye of the former was fixed keenly and searchingly on him ; over the features of the latter was spread a doubt and an anxiety not very consistent with the joviality of the day, and in his eye was a trouble that did not belong to youth.

There were two at least who saw something in those words, and the tone in which they were uttered.

Sir Thomas whispered to Charles, who sat next to him : "God grant that the next entertainment I am invited to may be an Irish wake ! there is some fun there ; one is not expecting—one doesn't know what shocking—every minute, as one is now ; it is all over with the dead man ; there he is, settled out on the table before you, comfortable and clean, cleaner than ever he was in his lifetime ; and it is really a charming sight at those wakes to see the pretty girls as they drop in one after another, sinking on their knees at the door and putting up a prayer for the soul of the

departed. When I was a young chap I often made my escape from Castle Ffolliott in spite of the vigilance of my tutor, and sat up at a tenant's wake till two in the morning."

"But, sir," said George, "if a person got hungry after sitting up half the night, was there anything on the table besides the man?"

"Oh, certainly; the punch and *tay* circulated merrily; and there was plenty of bread and butter too; but whiskey is meat and drink both to the Irish. It would take a great deal of whiskey though to get this wedding as merry as a wake."

When the ladies came into the drawing-room they did their best to cheer the bride, and Lady Anne observed to Mrs Routledge that her situation was far too trying, and that it would have been much better if they had gone off alone after the *déjeuner* on their excursion, in which Mrs Routledge fully agreed with her. But Caroline seemed neither bashful nor agitated, there was a dullness and self-concentration about her; an indifference to everything. Sarah watched her anxiously.

Before the gentlemen joined the ladies, Campbell went to the yard and ordered his dog to be untied, and permitted to come round and lie on the steps of the front door; he was not accustomed to be confined in that manner.

After tea Fitzarthur proposed a quadrille on the carpet to pass away the rest of the evening, Mrs Routledge offered to play, and the four young men and the four bridesmaids danced with tolerable animation, while the rest looked on; the bride sat on the sofa by her aunt, Campbell stood with his back to the fire, and Davenport harangued Sir Thomas.

After the first set was over, and when they had just sat down, the footman came in hastily and summoned Lord Fitzarthur from the room. He found Gordon in the hall.

"Oh, my Lord," he cried, "my Lady's pleasure-house—what's its name?—Song Sowsy,—it is on fire! but we hope to put it out quick, there are so many of us. I just ran here to say it is better not to tell the company in the drawing-room a word about it, it would be so shocking to terrify her Ladyship the very night of her marriage, so, if you will keep them all amused, I will undertake to have it out soon."

"It must be the work of an incendiary," exclaimed Fitzarthur, "for I was there to-day, and there was no fire in the stove."

"We will have a great investigation of that," answered Gor-

don, "for I am much of your Lordship's opinion, but now for putting it out."

He then hastened off. Lord Fitzarthur went back to the drawing-room, and, after whispering for a few moments with Mr Routledge, he went away. Mr Routledge then assured the ladies he had not danced for fifteen years, but on this happy occasion he would become a boy again, and solicit the hand of the youngest lady in the room; he accordingly led off Lucy Bolton, the rest followed, and Mrs Routledge again struck up a merry quadrille.

Lord Fitzarthur ran to the yard to urge the already anxious servants. They were all gone except the gardener.

"My Lord," said he, "I have sent every soul that was here off to the fire; even the women are gone, except those who are preparing the supper."

"Gone to stare and be in the way," said Lord Fitzarthur; "I will order them back. And listen,—I don't think this place ought to be left quite empty; there are enough gone to put out the fire; do you stay here, and keep your eye on everything."

"As you please, my Lord."

Fitzarthur then darted off to the scene of action.

"Well, is not this lucky?" thought the man to himself, when he was left alone. "I could not have gone anyhow, but I was not sure what excuse to make, and now he has desired me to stay! What a job I have put my foot in! Whatever has set me so mad about that girl? I know—I'm sure—it is not the money I care for: I would not do this for any other woman on this side the globe if I got a thousand pounds for it; God forgive me!" He went into the old Abbey, stumbling and tumbling among the long grass and stones.

"Dick, are you ready?"

"Yes," answered a voice; "'tis all right, and I am waiting nigh the great window."

"Come then, strike a match and light the lantern," said the gardener.

We have already mentioned that Sans Souci was a quarter of a mile from the house, so it took some time before the servants, zealous as they might be, could arrive there. The fire had made fearful progress before any effort could be used to get it under. Then each did everything in his power, but after an hour of unavailing toil, the little fairy fabric was a heap of smouldering

ruins. A good deal of the books, furniture, and bijoux were saved, and the smaller articles were conveyed to the house by the servants ; it was necessary to leave the larger things in the garden for the night, and one of the men was ordered to get some carpets to throw over them. The great aim was, not to let Lady Caroline hear anything of the disaster ; the next day, after she was gone, her brother was to collect all that was preserved into a place of safety, and investigate the cause of the misfortune. The maid-servants were all charged to be dumb, but indeed their young mistress was safe from them, as she would see only Elpsley to-night, who was quite in her interests. So they all returned sadly and wearily to the house, and each soon fell into his usual place.

Lord Fitzarthur, having changed most of his clothes, hastened to the drawing-room, where Mr Routledge had been keeping up the dancing with all his energy.

"Where on earth have you been ?" cried his father and aunt, almost at the same moment. He made some excuse, and, jaded as he looked, expressed himself quite ready to dance again.

"A little too late now," said the Earl, "besides, the ladies would have some pity on you ; you look as if you had walked ten miles since tea."

The young man made no answer, but sat down on a couch, and leant his head on the scroll.

Supper was now announced. The Earl looked at Fitzarthur and then at Lady Caroline.

"My dear children," he exclaimed, "this is the last night you will ever be really together again ; you have been fondly attached since your infancy, but now, according to the course of nature, you part. Let me see you walking once more arm-in-arm together : Fitzarthur, take your dear sister in to supper."

He obeyed and led her away. They passed by the piano, against which Campbell was leaning with his eyes on the ground, apparently not hearing what was going on. Her dress by chance swung against his legs, and he started and looked up. Their eyes met ;—hers, with an expression of sad and deep meaning, of which no one would have thought them capable. He gave a slight groan, scarcely audible, but it reached her ear. He looked after her until her dazzling white figure disappeared. The Earl looked after her also with tears in his eyes. He then took Mrs Routledge and Lady Anne on each arm, and followed his

children, apologising to the ladies for this little outbreak of affection and breach of etiquette, in sending in the young people before himself and his guests ;—" but," he added, " we are quite a family party,—I hope, Mrs Routledge, you and I will soon be intimate friends."

She hoped so too ; she loved him already for his tenderness and affection.

Dr Campbell and Edmund reached the supper-room door together. They were the last.

" Go on, dear Edmund," said the former, pressing his hand in a peculiar manner.

The other felt a kind of tremor come over him, but obeyed. The servants, who had been lining the hall when the company passed through it, now crowded into the supper-room to attend at table. Campbell, instead of going in after Edmund, went up the empty hall, into the passage where his pistols were still on the high shelf, took them down, and put them in his pockets. He then seized the first hat that came to hand, and dashed out at the front door, where he was joined by the delighted Troubadour, and both plunged into the depths of the shrubbery on the left side of the house.

The company sat down to supper. The *cuisinière*, the decorator, and the whole band, in short, seemed to have reserved the essence of their art for this last repast. Flowers, fruits, confectionery spun and moulded into every form of ingenuity, fricassees, fowls, light viands of every variety, were served on plate or glass with such singular felicity of disposal, and such brilliant contrast of colour, that the whole looked like one of those dazzling symmetrical figures cast up by a turn of the kaleidoscope. There was a place left vacant at Lady Caroline's right for Dr Campbell ; at her request Miss Bolton sat down on her left. Lord Northwood, who was an accomplished carver, and always chose to help the dish that was before him, invited Mrs Routledge to take some roast pigeon which certainly looked very tempting.

" We do not seem to be all assembled yet," said she, glancing at the empty chair ; " I miss the bridegroom."

" What ! Campbell not come in ! are we waiting for Campbell ? eh ?" said the Earl in his nervous manner.

" I suppose he will be here in a moment," said Mrs Routledge.

" It would not be seemly in us to begin without him," said Mr Routledge.

"What lady did he bring in?" asked Sir Thomas; "she could give the latest news of him."

"He did not bring in any one, sir," said Edmund; "he and I walked to the door together, and I thought he was coming in along with me."

"Did he complain of being ill?" asked Mr Davenport.

"No, sir."

"He will be here in a moment of course—in a moment," said the Earl, encouraging himself, and he laid down the carving-fork and took up his silver one, and began to study his crest as if he had never seen it before.

"Vincent," said Lord Fitzarthur, "go up and see whether he is in the room where he spent the day."

The man obeyed, and returned with the intelligence that he was not there. Sir Thomas and Mr Davenport admired the beauty of the kaleidoscopic figure, but were getting anxious to derange its symmetrical order; neither, however, could attempt to begin, as the ladies seemed determined not to touch a morsel until the bridegroom was found. Sir Thomas came to the conclusion that he was the most confounded bore that ever infested a merry-making; Davenport settled that he was under demoniacal possession. Lady Anne cast a look at her niece; she was as white and motionless as marble.

"Come, come, this will never answer," said she, "he must be found; if he is ill anywhere he should let us know."

She rose and gave some orders to the servants, two or three of whom left the room.

"I have desired every cranny of the house, where he might possibly be, to be searched," she added.

"And I will go and look in front," said Edmund; "he might have felt faint and gone to the lawn for fresh air."

"Thank you, my dear fellow," said Lord Northwood; then addressing his daughter:—

"Caroline, love, did he say anything to you about wanting or intending to go anywhere at supper-time?"

"Oh no, papa, he did not speak a word to me this evening," she answered.

Lord Fitzarthur sat at the foot of the table with an impenetrable look on: perhaps he scarcely knew himself what conclusion to come to, but his sister's simple answer must have placed Campbell in a very strange light before him. There was a pain-

ful silence for a time ; at last George said to Sir Thomas, who was next to him,—

“What a beautiful supper that is !”

It was certainly the most splendid set-out poor George had ever seen.

“Indeed it is,” answered Sir Thomas, “and very fortunate for us, too, that it should be so, as the sight of it is all we are likely to enjoy to-night.”

This was said in a whisper, of course, and a little mournful whispering was beginning between other next-door neighbours also, when the return of the servants who had been to search the house called every one’s attention to one point. They declared that they had examined every apartment of the establishment in vain. (Indeed, so zealous had they been that they made a strict scrutiny even into the private chambers of the maid servants, to the high indignation of that virtuous class of persons.)

Immediately after, Edmund came in from his out-door search, and said that he had traversed the lawn before the door, gone part of the way down the shrubberies, walked to the lodge at the gate—all to no purpose ; that he had then visited the yard, but neither there nor in any of the stables had he been, or, the grooms said, they must certainly have seen him ; that the gardener, finally, had told him he had visited every corner of the old Abbey with similar success. Here Gordon hurried in and whispered to Lord Fitzarthur that the doctor’s dog, which had been lying on the steps since tea-time, was gone, and his pistols, which he left on the shelf in the passage that morning, had been removed.

Fitzarthur coloured. His sister observed it, made a spring from her chair, and then sank back on it again, unable to move.

Sarah gave her a glass of wine, and her brother assured her that Gordon had not spoken of Dr Campbell. Being a little revived she whispered to Sarah that she could remain with the company no longer.

Sarah, only surprised that she had not given way before, rose to assist her out of the room. The other bridesmaids, with some vague notions of their duty under ordinary and happier circumstances, rose also and followed her to the hall. The Earl became greatly agitated, and Lady Anne did not wish to leave him ; she knew, too, her niece preferred Miss Bolton to every one. Lady Caroline sat down for a few minutes in the hall, and the front door was opened to give her fresh air. She requested of the Miss

Routledges and Lucy to return to the supper-room, which they did on a hint from Sarah. Dismayed at the proceedings on the whole, they clustered together in the nearest window, and pressing against the bright scarlet curtains with their radiant white dresses, pale faces, and dark flowing ringlets, they formed a beautiful group in 'a splendid frame, if any one had a thought then for artistic studies. George Bolton hastened over to them and invited them to go back to the table,—rather a hollow piece of civility certainly ; they naturally refused, and he remained talking to them and endeavouring to keep up their spirits.

There were not many left now at the "festive board," and to them Fitzarthur communicated the information received from Gordon.

"Then he is surely not in the house," said Davenport.

"Nor very near it, either," said Edmund.

"And he has set off on foot, too," said Sir Thomas, "for it seems he has not been to the stables for a horse."

"He would hardly have the effrontery to do such a cool thing as carry off one of the horses," said Fitzarthur.

"I will order my gig without delay," said Davenport, "and drive into Northwood, and see whether he is to be found in any of his old haunts."

"Why, what reason could he possibly have for behaving in such an outrageous manner?" cried Mr Routledge.

"Reason!" retorted Davenport; "what reason is there in the whole business? Has he behaved rationally for one moment to-day?—Not that I know of. If I am going to act unreasonably, it is the best way in which he can be met. To fight preposterous conduct with preposterous weapons may be the truest wisdom."

"I am sure he is mad—decidedly become insane," said Lady Anne, piteously.

"Indeed, my dear," said her husband, "he has been stepping up to that eminence by degrees the whole day ; it would be no wonder he were at the top now."

"My aunt has certainly made the only excuse that can be made for his infamous conduct," observed Lord Fitzarthur.

"'Infamous!' ah, my dear son—" murmured poor Lord Northwood.

"Yes," said Mr Routledge to Fitzarthur : "let us pause, and wait for proof, before we condemn him."

"Gentlemen!" cried Davenport, starting up; "whether it may be a desirable condition or not—he is as far from being mad as I am, though he may be acting unreasonably." I had some conversation with him to-day, and there is not a chap in the kingdom knows better what he is about. I regret being obliged to dissipate Lady Anne Ffolliott's most agreeable error, and I perfectly concur with Lord Fitzarthur in wishing he *was* mad. I am now going to seek for him where—Heaven grant I may not find him!"

He then hurried out of the room. The cause of his great excitement proceeded from a frightful notion that crossed his mind, that Campbell might have gone to the Vicarage to his wife. This was a mad thought, but still a discovery had been made that something wrong had passed between them, and who could tell how much further they had gone than he could discover? It was within the range of possibility that he had fled to her house to ask her to elope with him. When Lady Anne found herself defeated on the question of Campbell's insanity, she declared she was convinced he had shot himself in some lonesome field, and was preparing to give orders for an extensive search with lanterns, the moon having scarcely risen, when a most fearful shriek rang through the house, and made every one at the table start to their feet.

The unhappy Earl staggered a few steps forward towards the door.

"My dear father, stay here!" cried Fitzarthur; "uncle, Mr Routledge, do detain him. I will run and see what is the matter, and bring you word immediately, father."

Sir Thomas, Lady Anne, Mr Routledge, and Edmund, surrounded Lord Northwood. Charles ran to his mother, who was looking faint, and insisted on her taking some wine; the bridesmaids began to tremble, and Fanny Routledge even burst into tears. George could not but take her hand, saying everything soothing that he was able to think of, though his fancy must have been severely taxed, for realities seemed to be growing harsher every minute. Lord Fitzarthur, rushing out of the room, made for the bridal apartment, whence the shriek had evidently proceeded.

To account for this new shock we must return to Lady Caroline. As soon as she was a little refreshed by the air, Elpsley was summoned, and, leaning on both her and Sarah, Caroline

moved feebly along the hall. But whither were they to take her? Sarah was in favour of her own old apartment, but Elpsley assured her it was quite unprepared; in fact, the housemaids, rather inclined to amuse themselves on this holiday, had neglected it, thinking that, of all the rooms in the house, it was the most sure not to be wanted. There were corded trunks standing there, and much litter, which they had let lie to be arranged till the next day, when the wedding folks had left the Abbey. "And besides, ma'am," she concluded, "when Dr Campbell comes in, what will he say when he is told she is asleep in her own chamber?"

"When he comes in! but when will that be?" said Sarah, with a sorrowful shake of her head.

"Oh, take me somewhere!" cried Lady Caroline, "I am hardly able to stand."

So they led her to the Lady Adela's chamber. Elpsley took the key out of her pocket; the housemaid had just delivered it to her, saying the preparations were all complete. It had been kept closely locked since morning, lest any giddy young servant might exhibit it, if opportunity offered, to some of the rustic guests with whom the place was swarming, and this room being on the ground-floor was exposed to intrusion. The waiting-woman opened the door. The chamber was superbly furnished, and a light burned softly and dimly in a beautiful glass lamp. The bed was glorious with blue satin curtains and gilt fittings, and on it was a white satin quilt embroidered in coloured silks, the handiwork of Lord Northwood's great-grandmother. It had been used as a wedding quilt by many of her descendants, and Caroline had declared she would continue the good old custom. On the bed, then, was this quilt, but . . . Elpsley cuts short my sentence,—she gives a slight scream—

"Oh, Miss Bolton!—Dr Campbell!"

What?—the precious—the lost—the mourned;—and is he indeed found?—found *here*!

The two young ladies gave a violent start, and looked round the apartment. Out of every rose on the trellised paper they expected to see his face rising. There was no one to be seen.

"What do you mean by terrifying Lady Caroline in this idle manner?" cried Sarah, angrily.

"Nay,—madam—madam,—look at the bed!"

Both ladies looked directly. The satin quilt certainly rode high over the limbs of some one couching beneath. Lady Caroline fell into a chair: her teeth chattered audibly, and her breathing was not respiration merely, but a series of convulsive sobs.

"Are you mad," said Sarah to Elpsley, "to think he would behave thus? Whoever or whatever that is, it is *not* Dr Campbell."

"Oh no, no," said the agitated waiting-woman; "I recollect, — the door has been locked all the evening. He could not, if he wished, get in. But, good Lord! who else could, either?"

"See what it is directly," said Sarah, sternly; "Lady Caroline will die if you delay any longer."

Elpsley ran desperately to the bed, snatched off the bridal quilt, and then giving the terrible shriek that was heard in the supper-room, exclaimed, "Anthony the Monk!"

Lady Caroline fell on the floor in convulsions rather than hysterics. Elpsley walked frantically about the room, not heeding her mistress; and Sarah sank into a chair, for the moment incapable of action. In this state Lord Fitzarthur found the three females.

"Good heavens! Elpsley, what is the matter?"

She pointed to the bed. He rushed to it, and there saw Anthony lying calm, dumb, and stony in the midst of this storm of human existence. He said not a word, but drew the curtains. His family was not to be a fable for the whole neighbourhood to gossip about, marvel at, and pity. He then went to his sister, whom Sarah was endeavouring to raise. He lifted her up, set her on a chair, and desired Elpsley to support her until his return, which should be immediate. He then ran back to the supper-room, where all were awaiting him in breathless suspense, which was changed into horror when they saw the ghastly expression of his face. Yet his words seemed to belie his looks:—

"Nothing new has happened. My sister is the same way; —the waiting-maid—they are always conceited fools—was startled by some trifle, and gave that unconscionable scream,—that is all, father."

He darted off again, but Lady Anne followed him.

"Something *has* happened, Freddy. You must tell me."

"Go back to my father directly, aunt, and stay with him till I return."

His manner was of that kind which compels women to obey men. She went again to the supper-room.

"What news, dear Anne?" said the Earl.

"None yet, love. Dr Campbell has not been found."

The guests now saw that it was quite time for them to depart: they could not be of any use, and it was evident something had occurred which it was not desirable they should know. The carriages were ordered. Edmund expressed his intention of remaining all night, that he might make a more extensive search for Campbell about the grounds, as he was convinced he had put an end to himself in some neighbouring place. George led away Lucy with the tears streaming down her cheeks. Thus ended her happy day—a day that yesterday seemed fabulous in its promise. Mr Routledge wrung the Earl's hand, and promised to ride over early in the morning, in case he might be of any use; and a moment after all the guests were gone.

CHAPTER XIX.

VÆ DAPHNI!

"The wreath is twined, the way is strewn—the lordly train are met,
The halls are hung with coronals—why stays the bridegroom yet?"

Silence! forth we bring him

In his last array;

From love and grief the freed, the flown—

Way for the bier—make way!"—MRS HEMANS.

LORD FITZARTHUR hurried back to the ominous apartment, and took his sister in his arms; he then turned almost fiercely to Elpsley.

"If you disclose to any mortal that we have found that statue in this bed, you shall pay for it with everything except your bare life."

"Oh, my Lord," she answered, "whatever is your pleasure I will do, and nothing else."

He locked the door, and put the key in his pocket.

"And now to what place shall I carry this unfortunate young woman?" said he to Sarah.

"Perhaps to my room," she answered; "her own was neglected, and is in confusion."

But even his stern mind, under the immediate influence of the late discovery, shrank from any further connection with those two hateful chambers.

"No, no; I will take her to my apartment until her own is ready; Elpsley, get it prepared with all speed."

The woman hastened away.

"Do not forsake my poor sister, Miss Bolton," cried Fitzarthur, seeing Sarah drawing back.

She could not refuse to accompany him, and between them they laid her on his bed; she was now quite insensible. He watched her for a few minutes, considering what steps he should take. It is marvellous how serious suffering and a terrible episode in life destroys in a moment all etiquette and formality, and converts what would be modesty on ordinary occasions into mock delicacy and even unkindness. Sarah sat *tête-à-tête*, we may say, with Lord Fitzarthur in his bed-room at midnight with all his things that he had dashed off after coming in from the fire lying about in confusion, but still she felt not only no shame, but was perfectly unconscious of the slightest awkwardness. Her whole soul was absorbed in the misfortunes of this amiable family, so undeserving of such a lot, and yet so victimized, as it were. Nothing that can co exist with true sorrow, and be carried on under the pressure of intense suffering, is intrinsically wrong.

Sarah at last, growing uneasy at finding no remedies applied, bethought herself of calling Lady Anne, and the Earl and she were immediately at the side of the unfortunate bride. They were told her own room was not quite ready, and were not of course surprised that she was unwilling to occupy that which her newly-wedded love had so strangely fled from.

"We must have the doctor without delay!" cried the Earl. Then he gave a start. "What doctor?—Oh, my God!"

His family besought of him to go to bed; he could be of no use to his daughter, and as to Campbell,—if he was found information should be carried to him instantly.

"I will stay with her until she recovers from this faint," he said.

Various applications were tried, and at last she opened her eyes, and they met those of her father.

"I am better, papa," she murmured; "is this the old Abbey that we are all in?"

"No, my darling," said her aunt; "you are in your dear brother's room."

Then she stretched out her hand and moved it about, as if feeling for some other. Fitzarthur placed his within it, and she drew it to her mouth and kissed it;—he was her all again.

Her room was soon ready; the trunks packed for the wedding trip were pulled into the dressing-room, and her bed was made comfortable. The ladies and Elpsley undressed her; the sumptuous lace robe and the costly pearls were stowed out of sight like pestilential articles, and at last she was settled. She did not seem dangerously ill. Lady Anne, who knew something of a pulse, said she perceived no bad symptom, and her worn-out father consented to go to bed. Sarah put on a dressing-gown, and prepared to sit up with her; Elpsley of course did the same. Lord Fitzarthur went to his chamber, but did not undress; fagged to death he was indeed, but how could he go to rest? He was expecting Edmund and the servants in from the new voyage of discovery he heard they had undertaken, and he must inquire constantly during the night for his sister.

Sir Thomas was walking up and down the supper-room alone, with the untouched feast before him, when Gordon came in.

"So ho! Gordon! what news?"

"The doctor ain't found yet, sir, and 'tis one o'clock."

"And how are they above-stairs?"

"I have got my Lord to bed, sir; he is crying like a child; mayhap that'll do him good; as to my Lady Caroline, I hear she is in a very sad way; no wonder, surely."

"Indeed, Gordon, it is dreadful, and I'm sure if I could do anything for them I would; but what can I do? I am too old to go and join in the search, besides I'm very weak after the shock we have had."

He glanced his eye at the table.

"It might do you good to take something, sir; there is no lack of eatables here at any rate."

"By Jove! I won't touch one of them! What! sit down to *gormandize* by myself, after all that has happened! Come away, Gordon."

"What I came for, sir, was to see what is to be done with all this valuable plate; the servants are out looking for the doctor."

"Just lock the door and put the key in your pocket; and listen,—bring me up some little thing for supper to my dressing-room, for indeed I am not accustomed to these sort of things, and I can't stand them, though I look strong."

Gordon promised he would, then locked the door and went away, while Sir Thomas proceeded to his dressing-room.

On this same night, that is to say, about two or three in the morning, the family at Sunville were thrown into the greatest confusion and alarm. Miss Neville jumped up in her bed screaming, as if from some frightful dream. Her mother, her sister, and Miss Cope were soon with her.

"He is come! he is come!" she cried; "I saw him,—but where is he now?"

"Who is he, my love?" asked her terrified mother.

"You know very well who he is! how dare you ask me? Hush! he is there again—but he looks so soft and mild—why is not he angry?—I'd rather he would reproach me, tear me, bite me! but he does nothing, only point to a spot under his heart;—what is he doing that for!—ha, ha, ha! what have I to do with his heart . . . But what makes him keep pointing still to that spot?—there is no blood there . . . but his coat is dark—there might be blood without my seeing it,—is there blood, Letty Cope? you *shall* tell me . . . Stay, stay,—is not he smiling now?—but he is pointing still—and he is pale—oh, how horribly pale! Has he a sheet wrapped round his face?—Take it off directly, Letty Cope, and let me see his own sweet face as it is,—and tell him to point no more to his breast—I did nothing to his breast—that breast that I love so dearly!"

These sentences were occasionally interrupted by the entreaties of her friends that she would take some of the last mixture that Dr Strong had ordered her. But she seized the glass they brought her, and dashed it away against the opposite wall, from which it fell in shivers. Then she called for Higgin, and threatened vengeance on any one who refused to obey her.

"I am sorry for my share in this,—oh! I am sorry—I am sorry! can it be undone?"

She then fell into a violent fit of weeping.

"Oh, now she will get better," said her miserable mother; "what can be the meaning of all she has been saying?"

Neither Maria nor Miss Cope could tell.

"I will be quiet, mamma ; yes, yes, I will be quiet if you will send for Higgin."

Mrs Neville promised she would. Maria remonstrated.

"My dear, she will go mad if I don't ; there is no one here capable of managing her," said the mother.

"Just reason, mamma ; she does not know what she is saying, and you will go and send for a great rough farmer and bring him up to her room, perhaps, in the dead of night, because she has had a wild dream."

Mrs Neville would not reason, she knew she must be defeated there ; but her insight took a wider range, and she yielded to a demand behind which causes lurked the origin of which she knew not, though she gave them credit for being founded on some terrible truth. So Higgin was summoned, and he had not far to come, for he had been lately established in a new residence, much superior to the last, and very close to Sunville. While he was coming Miss Neville dressed herself, and when she heard he was arrived she rushed down-stairs and found him standing in the hall, amazed and bewildered at the abruptness with which he had been roused from his slumbers.

"Higgin !" she cried, "it must all be stopped ; go off—save him, save him !"

"Gracious Heaven, my Lady ! I'm sure I would die for you,—but what you desire is an impossibility ; for *me* to stop *him* ! stop the train—stop the flood !—If you knew what a granite heart he has ! If the keeper of the wild beasts went into the tiger's den would I follow him to pull him out ?—Maybe I would, but for all that I would not go attempt to save this poor gentleman if there was time now to do it ;—God of heaven ! I wish I had never lifted my finger against him—never gone for the child !"

"And so do I—yes, yes, so do I. So we are agreed, and can you do nothing ?"

"Oh ! honoured lady, he has been lying in wait for him months back, like a snake, and now he has got twisted about him. Could I tear him off ? Would not he crush us both with one grip ? And where they two may be now I can no more tell than the babe unborn."

"When did you see your young gentleman last ?"

"He went off to Northwood yesterday morning, and he is not back yet, my Lady. But whatever was to be, it's all over now ;

and who can tell but he had the worst of it himself? When he was going, he said, 'Higgin, it is to be nothing but fair play.'

"Oh! yes, yes," she answered eagerly; "it was as likely one should fall as the other. Why did you not remind me of that before?"

"My Lady, I forgot what he said, thinking of his look when he left the house."

"But for all that, he may be dead as well as another, if he did not meditate foul play. If he comes back—but he won't—at least I hope—"

"If he comes back, madam, shall I run and tell you?"

"Oh yes, the moment he comes, if he *does* come; and, Higgin, who knows? perhaps it is all forgiven, and they have made friends. I had a bad dream—that was the thing; but I am better. Go home, and hasten back when you have anything to tell."

He departed, muttering, "*Made friends!* God help her soft heart! 'Tis well I thought of what he said about fair play, 'twill keep her mind somewhat easier; little matter what he said, he has done for him."

Miss Neville returned to her room a little calmed; she called for a drink; her mother put some laudanum in the draught, and she was soon in what is by courtesy called "a sound sleep."

Mr Davenport, a prey, as we have said, to all sorts of vague and terrible suspicions, dashed into his gig and tore away to the Vicarage, to ascertain whether Campbell had been there—ay, and to satisfy himself (though he would hardly acknowledge it) that his wife had not left her home empty and her children motherless. He came down upon his hall like an avalanche, and asked the frightened servant, breathlessly, where her mistress was.

"Oh! sir, in bed this long time; it is past twelve o'clock. She was very poorly indeed all day, and ate nothing; and nurse was so uneasy, yourself being away, that she has been sitting in the room with her ever since she lay down."

This was a comfort.

"Was any visitor here to-day, or this evening?"

"Not a soul, sir."

"Was Mrs Davenport wishing for a doctor?"

"No, sir; nurse was saying it was a bad job to have Dr Campbell going away, but she said she did not require a doctor."

"I hope you bolted the front door when it got dusk, as I always tell you to do when I am out."

"Yes, sir ; it is bolted since five this evening."

"And no one came knocking since?"

"No, indeed, sir," answered she, astonished at these unusual questions.

Feeling pretty well assured that Campbell could not have been at his house, he ran up-stairs. The nurse, still at her post, now retired. Mrs Davenport, who did not seem to have been asleep, said, "Well, Arthur?"

"Indeed I have not much to say, Amelia; I am sorry you have been ill."

He glanced at her face ; it was perfectly white, and her eyes looked red and weary. She was grieving after the man to whom she gave the ring. He was inclined to take it out of his pocket and hand it to her, with a request that she would be more chary of his presents to her in future ; but then he pitied her with her tired, wan look, and her "present situation," which had hitherto always insured for her the tenderest treatment. What a night she would spend if he now acted thus! She told him she felt easier since she went to bed, and asked him whether they had a gay wedding.

"I cannot say we had ; you know better than I do, probably, that Campbell did not care for the lady he married, and that naturally threw some damp on the proceedings, and I am remarkably sorry I had any part in them. He was very disagreeable, in short, as men are likely to be who cannot get the woman they love best. I am tired now, and cannot talk any more ; you will perhaps hear plenty about it to-morrow."

She was terrified, thunderstruck at his cross, rough manner ; never in his life had he spoken to her so harshly ; it was evident from his words that he had found out something ; a chill like that of death came over her ; she closed her eyes and lay motionless. Davenport took the ring out of his pocket, laid it on the dressing-table, and went to bed.

Chilly and sad dawned the morning after the bridal ; the mystery of the bridegroom's disappearance not yet explained. Edmund, with the servants, had remained out until three o'clock searching for him in vain. He then inclined to the opinion that he had not put an end to himself, but had left the country. Why he should wait to do so until the knot was tied, he could not imagine. Why not choose the time when both were free, and open to form a happier engagement ? Did it not appear devilish

to forsake her for ever after having first placed a veto on the possibility of her obtaining some other partner? Still he was loth to believe anything so unfavourable of his dear master. Perhaps the note that arrived for him had some share in his disappearance; perhaps the packet he had desired him to open, if he did not go on his wedding tour, might explain everything; he longed to examine it, but the time was not come for doing so. He threw himself on the bed in the north green-room, where Campbell's trunks were still lying. How mournful they looked! After a while, exhausted with the fatigue he had undergone, he fell asleep.

George Bolton rose early, and before Lucy was up hastily took some coffee and prepared to walk to the Abbey to learn the latest news, and offer any assistance he could give. As he was going out at the gate he met a boy bringing a note from Miss Hobbes, Quill's half-sister, written in great anxiety, requesting to know whether her brother had remained to sleep at Laburnum Lodge, for he had not yet made his appearance at her cottage. The note was dated seven o'clock in the morning. Here was a new alarm. Quill, as the servants mentioned, left Laburnum Lodge about eleven o'clock, or rather later, on his return home. What could have become of him? And was his disappearance connected in any way with that of Campbell? It seemed almost impossible that it could, and still the coincidence was singular. All he could do at present was to answer Miss Hobbes's note without delay; and having first questioned Sam closely, he informed her that Quill had remained at their house more than an hour after Mr Bolton had gone to bed; that he was waiting for the moon to rise before he set out on his walk; and that while alone he amused himself with a new book of Lucy's, that seemed to interest him greatly; that when it was sufficiently light he had left the house in his usual health and spirits. He expressed great regret that he was missing, and assured her that when some other distressing avocations gave him a moment's leisure he would commence a search for him. He then proceeded to the Abbey, pondering on all these strange events.

Mr Davenport also rose early. His wife was asleep when he got up. She had lain awake all night, conning over his cruel and mysterious words. She was sure something unpleasant had happened at the wedding, but what it was she could not settle, but she connected it in some way with Campbell's unfortunate attachment to herself. Weary with weeping, she fell asleep at

last towards six o'clock—the first uneasy night since her marriage that she had spent in utter loneliness, seeking no sympathy from her husband, and offered none. When he was dressed he gazed for some moments on her pale, mournful, beautiful face. For ten years he had never looked on that countenance without a feeling approaching to adoration ; to him her name had been synonymous with perfection, and to-day, on what step in the ladder to that eminence would he dare to inscribe it ? He was now looking on one who had vowed to him the highest place in her affections, but who yet loved another better than him—one, of whose heart years of deepest devotion had been unable to render him the sole possessor. She had given the ring, the pledge of their engagement, to Campbell ; and who knows what else she had given him ? And he had been such a blind fool for so long a time ! He had been driving them into one another's arms when he thought he was only urging the physician to closer attention to his patient ! What years of enjoyment they had had by his unconscious connivance ! And he, sharp as he fancied himself, could not perceive that she lived in the light of that man's countenance alone ! He was not only deceived but humiliated ; mortified at his blindness—his simplicity. Poor fellow ! with his warm, doting, guileless heart, it was well he had nothing more tangible than the ring. One reality is worse than a thousand suspicions, however extreme ; for one new suggestion from ourselves or others may put them, baseless and shadowy, to flight for ever ; yet the world is inclined to consider them the keenest engines of torture, because it is in our own power to fashion, drape, and arm them as our frantic imaginations prompt. Yes, Davenport was spared what would have rent his generous heart in twain had he known it :

“ He found not Cassio's kisses on her lips.”

There they lay, a little apart, as perfect as sculpture and as pure-looking as St Cecilia's. He could scarce refrain from kissing them, but he must not—perhaps never more could ; for she had told him “ she did not deserve it,” and that dark saying must be explained ere he could feast on those roses again. He loved her—oh ! how he loved her still !

“ For if he loved her not, Chaos were come again.”

But Chaos must reign sooner than he should continue to love one unworthy of his soul's wealth. He turned away to the dress-

ing-table ; there lay the ring ; he took it up ; he could not arrange how he would give it to her ; he had not courage to present it to her himself, at last he snatched up a shawl-pin lying before him, plunged it up to its middle in the pincushion, let the ring drop on it, and ran down-stairs. He began a hasty breakfast, with a sinking, despairing sensation about his heart—his first experience of such a feeling. He was thirty-seven years old. How few of us reach such a term without this addition to our personal knowledge of the heart's emotions !

Before he had finished, the nurse came to ask for some sugar for the children's breakfast.

"Very well ; take some out of the locker ; and have an eye to your mistress, for I am going out ; I left her asleep."

"Then, sir, I will let her sleep as long as possible ; it is the best thing for her when she eats so little."

"I suppose it is. Stop a minute : how are the children ? I have not time to see them before I go."

"Quite well indeed, sir ; as gay as larks."

"Poor little things ! Well, give papa's love to them.—Nurse, which of those four younger ones do you think most like me ?"

"Oh, Master Sammy, sir ; every one says he is the image of you."

"And none of the rest,—you think ?"

"Why, sir, Master Jemmy is so very like grandpapa Warner—"

"I told you I was talking of the four young ones only : not Jemmy and Arthur."

"Well, they have all a great look of you, sir, except indeed Master Willy, the poor doctor's darling pet ; I don't count him a bit like you."

"And who is he like ?" cried Davenport, with an air of defiance that electrified and amazed her.

"He is most like his mamma, sir, of them all ; he has those large, sweet, blue eyes."

"Yes, so he has ; none of these children have black eyes."

"Oh, la, no, sir ; 'twould be funny if they had." (Not so very *funny* either, probably Davenport thought.) "And indeed, sir, when I'm sponging Master Willie's hair, I say 'tis the very ditto of your own ; just sets and curls the same way,—though his face ain't like."

"Just so : yes ; he has my hair precisely ; why did not you

observe so at first?—Well, now you may go, and I don't know when I shall be home, so she need not wait dinner for me."

The nurse went away, wondering at his manner altogether.

Having finished his breakfast he hurried off in his gig, and first called at each of the two little hotels of which the town boasted, and inquired whether Campbell had been at either of them the night before to hire a conveyance of any kind. He was answered in the negative, the persons questioned looking surprised at such a thing being asked. He left them to "burst in ignorance," and stopped next at Cypress Cottage. If Campbell was *lurking* there to be sure Rachel would not tell, but he might discover something by her manner. She flew to the door on seeing his gig from the window.

"Well, how goes it, Rachel? very lonesome, I suppose."

"Oh, a little or so, sir; but since my dear gentleman has done so splendidly for himself I should not complain. And I could not tell you all the good things he laid in for me before he went. And 'tis just like yourself too, sir, to condescend to call to tell me how the wedding and all went off."

It was evident that she was in perfect ignorance of the catastrophe, and the very least thing he could do now was to give her a sprightly sketch of the proceedings, and he did not want, either, to be the first to tell the poor creature of the disappearance; so, after saying a few vague things, he proceeded to Northwood Abbey, more puzzled than ever to divine what had become of Campbell.

George Bolton meantime was the first to arrive at the house of mourning. The front door was open, and he walked in. The men-servants were going to remove the supper, Gordon, who was dressing his master, having sent them down the key of the parlour. George hurried into the room after them to learn the latest news. They had nothing whatsoever to tell. The window-shutters had been just opened, and the pale slanting rays of the November sun were falling on the untouched feast. Not a viand, nor a confit, nor a flower had been displaced. There it lay in its beauty, and its glitter, and its worthlessness, like an unfulfilled hope. Sir Thomas and Gordon had forgotten to put out the lamps, and the oil was not yet all consumed; they scowled with their coarse yellow light on the sickly white beams of the morning; both meeting like two foes who can never be reconciled save by the destruction of one; the sun must be shut out or the

flame extinguished. The servants hastened to perform the latter task ; they then proceeded to remove, not the fragments left by those who had feasted, laughed, talked, and sung, and then retired to charm away satiety by dulcet slumbers, but the stately untasted repast of persons whom grief had already filled to repletion,—grief—that stern supporter of life in her own peculiar way. George's heart sickened, and he turned aside. This was his first introduction to sorrow, and it is well for the young persons who can be first made acquainted with that ruthless visitant through sympathy, rather than through its direct action on themselves : the shock is less terrible to the tender, joyous heart which is thus prepared by a mild discipline for the cruel weight of personal suffering which must come to themselves before long. He sat down in the hall, and in a few minutes Sarah came running down to him, looking pale and weary ; she had been up all the last night, and great part of the night before. Hearing he was below, she hoped he had something to communicate, and was disappointed to find he himself had come for information. She told him Lady Caroline was very quiet,—too much so indeed ; she would rather have her a little more animated in her grief, there was a stupor about her that was alarming. She told him also how Sans Souci had been burned—by design, it was suspected ; he told her how Quill was missing ; they looked with wonder and woe into one another's eyes ; nothing but tragedy and mystery everywhere. Of Anthony the Monk's importation to the nuptial chamber she said nothing, Lord Fitzarthur having requested to have that kept secret from every one ; there was quite enough going on at present to make them objects of wonder and compassion in the country, but in due time, if possible, the perpetrators of the deed should be dragged to light. He had discussed the matter with Sarah and Elpsley when he had gone to visit his sister in the early morning ; they all agreed that the statue must have been taken in through the window while every one was engaged at the fire at Sans Souci, otherwise it could not have been carried across the yard from the Abbey without being noticed ; and as the gardener alone had remained behind, suspicion fastened on him. Elpsley remarked that it could not have been done without the upper housemaid being an accomplice, for she had the key of the room all day, and no one else could have unbarred the window at the inside for its admittance. So all these points were stored up for a future day of reckoning. Lord Fitzar-

thur moreover strongly suspected that Sans Souci had been purposely fired, in order to produce a diversion from the yard, and so facilitate the location of the statue in the bed ;—but what the motive for such conduct could be, was a secret not to be guessed at. Might the same fiends who did this have made away with the unfortunate Campbell ? Or might Campbell have been privy to the introduction of the statue ? Sarah exclaimed that was impossible, unless he had lost his reason ; Fitzarthur observed that his behaviour during the day had been very like that of a madman ; he was absent, bewildered, silent, sad : fainting in the morning under the agony of the duties he had undertaken ; locking himself up in his room all the afternoon ; in the evening moving like a galvanized corpse, and at night vanishing away like a spent taper. As he shaved and dressed he pondered still more on this strange conduct, until at last he became convinced that if Campbell was not roaming through the country a lunatic, he had eloped to a foreign land to avoid concluding a marriage which, for some unknown reason, he held in abhorrence. If he had marched off the day before, even, it would have been a good riddance,—but to mock his sister with matrimony, to tie her down, and then walk away ! It was maddening.

When Sarah returned to Lady Caroline, George sauntered out to the steps, considering what he should next do. Standing about the porch were some elderly men, a few of those tenants who had enjoyed the Earl's hospitality the day before. They had heard of the singular event with which the festivities concluded, and were come to make kind inquiries.

"Strange mishap, this, sir," said one ; "how is his Lordship taking it ?"

He could not venture even to name the bride, with the native delicacy that we occasionally find even among the lower orders.

"I have not seen him this morning," answered George.

"Farmer Pratt and I sent our sons and some other active fellows out at five o'clock this morning to search for the doctor," said another ; "to say nothing of my Lord's trouble, he himself is a man we are under great compliment to. I don't know where my missus would be now only for him."

"He's remarkable clever," said another ; "he was only a week attending my leg when it healed ; and now to think he should melt away from all his good luck !"

"I'm pretty sure he's gone crazy," said the first ; "he looked

very like it coming out of the coach yesterday ; none of us can account for God's doings—and I think he is straying about the country : but if he is within ten miles of this place our lads will bring him back."

"I hope they may find him, my good friend," said George, "but indeed—"

He sighed, and turned into the hall, where he found Lord Northwood just come down-stairs, closely attended by Gordon. Lord Fitzarthur was there too.

"Ha ! my dear Bolton, are you here ?" said the Earl ; "this is kind ; every one is kind to me."

He looked ten years older than he had done the morning before.

"No news yet : he is not come back," he added, tossing up his head mournfully.

"Come back !" repeated Lord Fitzarthur scornfully ; "I should like to see him come back, after spending the night out ! I should know how to deal with him."

"Oh, my son !" murmured the old man ; "have patience until we learn a little more."

"Learn more ! what more is to be learned, sir ? Are we not in full possession of the atrocious act he has committed, when he married my sister yesterday morning with the full determination of running away from her yesterday night ? For I am sure he has been meditating this flight for some time. Was there ever seen such a lover as he was ? but I said nothing. Why should I—when I saw you were all infatuated beyond redemption ? Was there ever seen such a bridegroom as he was ? Did he show a particle of good feeling, to say nothing of tenderness or warmth ? No ; nor did one shade of his conduct escape me. And to think that the villain would not make off sooner. To think that he should first desecrate the holy altar with lying vows, involve my unhappy sister in a cursed engagement to him, and then, like a mocking fiend, glide away into the darkness of his hell, leaving her to pine, mayhap in a lunatic asylum, a widowed wife and wedded maid ! I am driven to madness by the thought !"

Lord Northwood sank down on a chair in the hall, leant his elbow on a marble table, and gave a deep groan.

"Oh, Master Freddy !" said Gordon, on whose knees the young man had been brought up, and who called him "Master Freddy" in cases of great extremity ; "oh, Master Freddy, don't be too

harsh ! let us wait a little time before we condemn ; the Lord himself, who can read into the blackness of the heart, is long-suffering. How could a person who seemed in such deep grief ever since he returned from church—how could it be that he was plaining only the coldest wickedness ? ”

“ Yes, yes, my child,” said Lady Anne, who had been standing, unperceived, behind her nephew while he was speaking. “ Gordon is right ; he had no previous intention of running away ; he was going on very well until that little girl made her appearance—that it was which quite upset him. I know it ; did not he faint directly on looking at her ? and there are others that think the same as I do ; his flight is connected in some way with her ; it is a mystery, to be sure, as yet, but all may come to light before long.”

“ Don’t tell me, aunt, that he did not behave scandalously, shamefully from the very beginning ! Did he not come to a dead fix in the middle of the aisle, immovable as the rock of Gibraltar, with his eyes glaring at the picture over the communion table, while Mr Davenport in vain endeavoured to drive him on—because he was ‘ high church,’ forsooth ! Did not he refuse to repeat the vows till Mr Davenport had to call out to him ? Did not he put a turquoise ring on the prayer-book ? the clergyman himself ready to sink into the earth with shame. Had not Edmund Bolton to drag him off his knees ? and had not Mr Routledge to beat him almost, to make him give my sister—his newly-made wife—his arm to conduct her out of church. Now, tell me that he was quite right until he was frightened out of his senses, indeed, by a pretty little girl with a basket of flowers !—But I saw none of all these things, because I did not collar him, and horsewhip him, and send him about his business, as I ought to have done, before it was too late, and which, to the day of my death, I shall deplore not having done.”

Lord Fitzarthur seldom got into a rage, never without good cause, but when he did he was terrific. He stood erect, ghastly pale after his night of vigils and wretchedness ; his low eyebrows seemed to press lower over his eyes, whence shot a glance that looked as if fraught with hell-fire for the annihilation of Campbell. There was a profound silence, for he had reached the point where remonstrance becomes dangerous. Suddenly tumultuous shouts and loud cries were heard in the avenue : George Bolton, Gordon, and Fitzarthur too, rushed to the steps. The noise proceeded from

a crowd of young peasants who were hastening to the door, dragging something along with them, while the old men who had been speaking to George were running to meet them with uplifted arms and looks of terror. They reached the steps, widened their ranks a little, and in the midst of them, held fast by both arms, with his clothes soiled and torn, his face smeared and lemon-coloured, his head bare, his eye-balls rolling, his mouth open, and his wrist-bands stained with blood, the wretched Quill was discovered. A lad was leading Troubadour by a silk handkerchief.

All the youths spoke together : "My Lord, this chap knows something of the doctor !" "My Lord, this fellow has surely killed the doctor !" "And stolen his dog !" "We found him sitting in a field jabbering, and keeping fast hold of the beast." "He's pretending to be mad, I expect, that nothing may be done to him."

"Hush !" cried George, rushing into the midst of them, and endeavouring to rescue Quill ; "I'll pledge my life he has not hurt a hair of his head ; loose him directly ; you are setting him mad by your violence !"

Lord Fitzarthur also glancing at him, recognized, even in that state, the person whom he had asked to hold his horses on the village green.

"Yes, I am sure he would not injure any one ; give him up to me immediately ; you may be certain I will detain him until he fully accounts for his present situation."

Quill was placed, sitting, on the steps ; he looked wildly about, and discovering the face of a friend in his dear George, he threw his arms round him, and fell into a fit of weeping. George spoke kindly to him, and gave him some water. Edmund also, who had just come down-stairs and been told of the manner in which he had been brought, helped to support him.

"Did he tell you nothing ?" asked Fitzarthur of the young men.

"My Lord," said one, "he kept on saying 'The churchyard, the churchyard !' and nothing more, so we sent four stout fellows to look for the doctor there."

Quill from his fit of crying advanced to hysterical sobs. To ask him any questions now was impossible. He had evidently been up all night : the Boltons perceived that he had the same clothes on (his best), which he wore the morning before, when he arrived to spend the day with Mr Bolton.

"If he is let lie perfectly quiet for half an hour," said Edmund,

"he will come round ; he has been baited almost to the pitch of insanity by the officious zeal of those rough fellows."

Gordon offered the use of his apartment, and Quill having been taken there and made lie down, became quite tranquil, and finally began to doze.

"Now, my friends," said Lord Fitzarthur to the young peasants, "go round to the yard and I will order you some refreshment."

They set off, but on looking by chance down the straight avenue they gave a great cry.

"Oh, my Lord ! my Lord ! the doctor is coming, the doctor is coming !"

Fitzarthur gave a tremendous start. Did he dare to return ? Had he the audacity to make his appearance, after having spent his wedding night—who could tell where ? Had he the assurance to face the illustrious house that had condescended to admit him into its bosom, after laughing it to scorn at the very crisis when his most fervent devotions should have been poured out ? In what guise was he flaunting back to his insulted, his languishing bride ? Was he walking ? was he on horseback ? was he in a carriage ? Fitzarthur looked on before him—looked round—looked everywhere—but he could not obtain the least glimpse of him. Still the young men had positively announced his approach. The eyes of those delicately reared amidst bounded halls and chambers fall far short, in the stretch of their vision, of the eyes of the peasants, who, reared out of doors, are in the habit of straining their optical nerves to take in every possible object between them and the circle bounding earth and sky. So no wonder the sons of the farmers had seen what their young lord could not yet discern. But soon he perceived four stout young men advancing up the avenue with the even pace and the heavy tread of persons on whose shoulders some superincumbent load presses. On they came—nearer—nearer still ; surely Lord Fitzarthur is not quite blind—alas, no ! he sees now, too clearly—they are bearing the corpse of Dr Campbell !

"Oh, heavens ! Gordon, see about my father—Lady Anne ; take them somewhere—out of sight."

Gordon flew into the house.

A little before this sad procession had arrived at the steps, two gentlemen were pushing up the avenue in hot haste. They were Mr Davenport in his gig and Mr Routledge on horseback.

They had seen the men going on before them, carrying something black and heavy-looking ; suspicious and trembling, they urged on their horses, and the entire cavalcade reached the porch of Northwood Abbey at the same moment, and halted. Davenport pressed close to the men, and gazed on the horizontal figure they bore. The large black eyes were wide open, and he met the death-stare of one whose presence would never more trouble him with fears about Amelia Warner's divided allegiance—Amelia Warner's broken vows. He was lifted insensible out of his gig. Campbell was conveyed to the north green-chamber, and laid on the bed. There was a pistol-wound in his left side, a little below the region of the heart.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DOCTOR AND THE TIGER IN ASHCOMBE CHURCHYARD.

“Yet not the less for this my slow delay
Will I be swift in execution,
Steadfast, and frightful to the guilty soul
Of him that did this thing.”—WILLIAM CALDWELL ROSCOE.

To account for Dr Campbell's abrupt flight and its tragical termination, we must return to the moment when Edmund delivered into his hand the note that had been brought up-stairs by the footman, and with the contents of which the reader is still unacquainted. They were as follows :

“Your daughter whom you saw to-day, and of whose presence in this neighbourhood you can therefore have no doubt, is safe, and shall suffer no injury, if you will act as thus required. This night, between ten and eleven, go down the shrubbery which is at the left-hand side of Northwood House, and when you reach the little gate opening into the road you will find a man waiting for you. No cowardly attack is to be made on your life—on this you may depend. But if you fail to go—the dead body of your child shall be sent in to her stepmother early to-morrow morning. On this you may also depend. He who thus writes never yet

failed in executing anything he affirmed he would do. If you keep the appointment your child shall be delivered to her friends to-morrow. Send an answer in your own handwriting, which he who pens this well knows."

Campbell read this note with astonishment, not unmingled with alarm, but still it brought some relief. His child was safe, and he could keep her so by giving an interview to the unknown writer at the shrubbery gate. But who was this man, or what did he want with him? He had promised there should be no attack on his person, but as to the promises of characters so desperate as he appeared to be, no reliance could be placed on them. Perhaps he desired to extract a large sum of money from him, by having the child in his power. No one but Higgin knew where the child resided, so he alone could have stolen her, and must it not be he who was acting thus? But he dismissed this idea directly; he knew Higgin long enough to understand thoroughly that though he might be won by bribes to make a tool of himself, he wanted, if nothing else, the force of mind that would enable him to act this daring, ruffianly part. Higgin was some agent in the affair certainly, but there was a greater and more tremendous spirit of evil behind Higgin that was advancing to engulf him. But he must make up his mind,—the messenger was waiting, and after a little more deliberation he did make it up.

The note he sent down by Edmund contained the following few words:

"I will be at the place appointed to-night at the hour named.
—ROBERT CAMPBELL."

Yes; he resolved to go. It would be a far better chance for his little girl's safety than if he were to set out now on a wild search for her which would probably be fruitless, as Higgin might not be forthcoming, and as to Mrs Ford—he could never get anything out of her that would criminate her son-in-law. He felt sure that if he went, no harm would happen to his daughter; they seemed to be using her merely as an instrument. As to himself—they wanted to murder him probably—but what was the alternative? they were to murder his adored child, and send her body to Northwood Abbey. He would have given his life for hers at any time, but now—existence was hateful to him—he had lost Milly for ever. He knew Davenport well; with him, a suspicion once evoked could never be laid; there was not a being on earth more jealously watchful over his treasures than he was;

the perfect liberty he gave Campbell in his household arose, not from carelessness, but from the unbounded confidence he placed in the disinterested attachment of his friend. It had been easy enough to make periodical resolves to quit the country, and leave Milly to her husband and children, but the separation was now pronounced, and the prospect of it was not endurable. He would save his darling child's life and perish himself, and it would be a merciful relief. He gave up any idea that the object of the person who addressed him was to extort money; Nannie Ford's hints all pointed to personal danger; the note was written in a most gentleman-like hand; it was no low, mercenary knave who penned it: he was actuated by a deeper, more terrible motive than the love of pelf—he, who could hold out that awful threat if his bidding was not obeyed. A guilty past is a poor auxiliary to a perplexed present. If he had the *mens conscia recti* he might proceed to-night to the mysterious trysting-place attended by Mr Routledge as a magistrate and backed by three or four armed policemen to seize the villain who dared to address to him such an atrocious letter as this. But the first step in such a proceeding must be to show the letter to Lord Northwood and Mr Routledge, confess himself the father of the child, and reveal a sad tale of sin and late remorse. No wonder he had not courage to do this, and on his wedding day, and to his new father-in-law—few would. Yet had he been wedded that morning to a woman on whom his soul doted with a single and undivided affection, scarcely would he have consented to perish thus without a struggle. He might have gone even to the length of telling his friends the whole truth. But now—with the prospect of such a future before him, a future to be spent *with* Caroline, *apart* from Milly,—ay, so near, and yet sundered,—with this to be weighed against the revelation necessary for his deliverance,—silence and death were assuredly his best friends—his most dignified resource. The papers that he had left in Edmund's hands contained his wishes with regard to the disposal of his small property; he left it to his child, whom he described as Anne Purdon, granddaughter to the Rev. Joseph Purdon, and the same girl who had appeared suddenly in the churchyard that morning; he gave directions that if she was not forthcoming the next day she should be demanded at the hands of Higgin and Mrs Ford, and when found, sent to Mr Purdon. Of course the whole history would come out then,—but where would he be? Far from re-

proach, execration, and obloquy ;—he would have taken “the plunge opaque, beyond conjecture ;”—he would be in the abyss, absorbed in the Darknesses and the Silences. He gave some further directions ; he bequeathed a few trifles to particular friends, but nothing could now be left to Mr and Mrs Davenport, though his heart was filled with the thoughts of them even to bursting. He wrote a letter to Lord Northwood also, but this he did not give to Edmund ; he put it in his pocket, trusting to some other chance to get it conveyed to him. But he was very far from intending to let himself be hit like a crow, or cut down like a sheep ; he would take his pistols with him and defend himself to the last ;—and supposing he escaped—supposing that a murderous attack were not meditated—he could return to the Abbey,—but if it was too late to attempt to do so,—he was not without plans in this case either,—but why trouble the reader with them ? He lies a corpse in the “north green-chamber.”

No wonder then with such anticipations as these that he was somewhat absent and silent during this—his first evening in his brilliant new home, his last in this weary old world. After taking his dog and his pistols he darted into the shrubbery, as we have said, walked on quickly for a few moments, and then stopped. If he could see Milly once more ! He was going to face death and was leaving her for ever—he was leaving her to an irritated man, in a critical state of health, with none to fight for her, or soothe her, or watch over her safety. This was a pang almost too bitter to bear, but yet he must bear it, and if he were able even to go to see her, what could he do but tell her he was visiting her for the last time ? She was to be alone with a now suspicious husband,—it was horrible—was there any spirit in all the boundless space by which he was surrounded that would look on her and save her ? He dropped on his knees, and her name was on his lips. He prayed not for himself—he never did.

But we pray for those we love long after we have ceased to pray for ourselves. There is no coward crouching there, and reason herself loses all her cunning, and logic is cast aside for wild trust, when a mighty necessity is urging, and a fearful desolation is impending, and the victim is the idol of our own life, and there is no earthly arm left to save.

“Spirits of a thousand forms and powers, that haunt the fields of ether, from the empyrean above, down to the planets below,—is there not one to be found among you, less than the in-

comprehensible Absolute Infinite, more potent and more holy than man, who will fold a protecting wing round a being, pure perhaps as yourselves, but helpless as the feeblest and most fragile of existing things ? ”

He sprang up again and walked rapidly until he reached the little gate opening into the road. The moon which was on the wane had now risen, and Campbell perceived a tall, fine-looking young man waiting ; he stepped out into the road and joined him.

“ You are a little late,” said the stranger.

“ I cannot help it ; I came as soon as I could ; I suppose whatever business you have with me can be transacted as well now as an hour ago,” answered Campbell.

“ It can.”

He looked at Campbell, measuring him from head to foot, with his eyes. He seemed like a lion which, finding an inferior animal undoubtedly within his power, is careless in despatching it. Campbell was going to say something petulant to the effect that whatever he had to communicate, it would be desirable he would do it with as little delay as possible, but there was something indescribable about the other that awed him. Finding the stranger continued silent, he said : “ I think I know your voice.”

“ Probably you do ; we have met before.”

“ Are not you the person whom I encountered the night I was escorting Lady Caroline Fitzarthur home, and who opposed my progress ? ”

“ I am.”

Campbell glanced sharply at his face, it looked bright and fair—fairer than his own.

“ Then you are not a Hindoo ? ”

“ No.”

“ In the name of heaven, then, who or what are you ? ”

From his dry manner and laconic speeches, the stranger suddenly passed into an impetuous torrent.

“ I am one who, owing to the excitement to which I was that night wrought, was near revealing what would then have been revealed too soon. I am one who would have given my life to preserve the innocent, for I know into what a hell the innocent bring themselves and all who belong to them when they fall. I am one who sought to deliver a noble lady from the dis-

honour into which I justly deemed she was rushing—for I am he whose betrothed you had already dishonoured—I am Julius Livingstone !”

Campbell started back a few paces, as we may suppose people do who think they meet a visitor from another world. Had the earth yawned to give back the dead on this terrible day? Why did not its jaws swallow him up when it disgorged his deadly foe?

“You did not imagine that I was in the land of the living?” said Julius, with a hard smile, and falling back a little into his former manner.

“No; every one thought you were deceased.”

“Yes; that report spread abroad, I was so long without writing, and I suffered it to be confirmed; I thought I could accomplish my purposes better if my existence was not suspected.”

Campbell rejoined: “And what objection was there to coming boldly forward, and, in your own person, asking for satisfaction for the injury you had received? Did you think I would refuse to fight you? What did you gain by skulking about the country for a year, with painted face, performing antics?”

“Because I should bide my time. My paint and my antics did me good service. I would not watch for the precious moment of vengeance living cheerfully in my uncle’s house, tasting the pleasure of the passing hour—or rather pretending to taste it, and loathing it—known to every one, mixing freely with every one. And when the moment came, how could I have made vulgar minds understand why I waited so long? And could I for one instant have walked with head erect in the paths of men, with that cursed stain on my honour, even though none knew it had been contracted? Could I have calmly met you in society without stabbing you where you stood? Still I should frequent your haunts, and lie in wait for the befitting time. Ay; a skulking life was the best for me to lead until the hour of retribution should come. And it has come. As long as you were lonely, miserable, a prey to remorse, as I heard you were, I let you bide: you were carrying your tormentor about with you;—but the moment you dared to build up a fabric of happiness for yourself, and to woo those delights of which you have for ever deprived me—that hour your doom was sealed. I swore to the gods of heaven and the stars of all space that I would slay you

on your bridal night, just as you were going to ascend the silken couch of pleasure where the voluptuous arms of an earl's daughter were stretched to clasp you—where you thought to lie surrounded with luxury and wealth, drinking deep of the intoxicating cup of love! And I was to let that be! I, whose beloved you plucked, defiled, and then flung away into the abysses of everlasting night!”

“As heaven is my witness,” cried Campbell, “you do me the greatest injustice! I pluck your flower! What I resisted God only knows. How I fought for you and your rights, until words became a mere mockery, I need not tell you, for you would not believe me. Thus much I *will* say:—that young lady had no love for you but the love of a sister: she might have been forced to marry you, but she would have made you miserable.”

“Let her hate me—let her loathe me—do you dare to give that as an excuse for blighting her, ruining her, killing her?”

“No; I bow my head beneath all the infamy that can be piled on it. This, however, I say again:—I allured not that lady away from you; but I must not add any more on that subject—my lips are sealed;—her memory is sacred—I am content to die. But I have a right to look to the child's safety. Was it by your orders she was brought from France?”

“Yes.”

“And no one knew where she was but Higgin—Higgin! trebly dyed in perfidy. He swore not to betray me. I pensioned him with more than I could afford to give; he took my money until very lately, and broke his faith like a villain, and you did not disdain to make use of such an instrument!”

Julius answered: “Fate compels us sometimes to avail ourselves of unworthy means when no other can be obtained. But were Higgin the wretch you suppose him, I would have looked for an auxiliary elsewhere. But he did not betray you: your own violent temper led to your destruction. On that night—oh, heavens! must I speak of it?—when you were conducting her from the wood that she entered pure and left vile—you met a poor half-witted little fellow, who was innocently amusing himself, and your alarmed conscience made you think he was spying you, and you beat him so unmercifully that he required the attendance of a surgeon, to whom he told the occasion of his sad plight, naming her as your companion: the surgeon's suspicions were then awakened—no wonder they were confirmed by her

singular death in a certain number of months afterwards. That man, ungenerously, I allow, wished to ruin you, or banish you the country if he could, for you had got much of the practice he once enjoyed ;—he wrote me a letter, telling me what he knew, and what he suspected ;—her father had previously written me a minute account of her death, as far as he understood it—to me it was highly unsatisfactory and perplexing ;—the surgeon's letter was very long in reaching me—he directed it wrong—he did not know I was in Upper India—but at last I got it—and then I guessed all—and then—there was a long period of darkness—my brain was disturbed—a false account of my death reached home—but I recovered at length—though I am distraught still occasionally—but I got home finally, to do the work I was destined to do. I let the conviction of my death remain ; I went disguised to Higgin, but through all my disguise he found me out, he knew and loved me from my infancy ; so I told him all I had heard, and why I had come, and I saw in a moment by his face that I was right in my conjectures. When he found I had discovered the fell secret, he talked freely of it, but he did not betray you—no, and I am sure he never would have done so ; and when he found he could not dissuade me from my projected vengeance, he gave up his pension, for he said he would not take your money and give me a lodging in his house. So Higgin is *no* traitor."

"And who went for the child?" asked Campbell.

"He did," answered Julius ; "he swore not to divulge your secret, but that was all he swore ; and you were unkind to him lately ; he was exasperated with you ; nevertheless, a large offer had to be made before he could be induced to steal her away."

"And where were these mighty sums procured?" said Campbell ; "your uncle has got all your property."

"Sdeath ! do you think I am here to answer your questions ? What I have told you was told to clear the character of a faithful follower of my family."

"I demand of you to tell me, at any rate," cried Campbell, "why in the name of mercy you did not leave the unoffending infant with her friends, instead of thrusting her into the churchyard to-day by that infernal machination?"

"It was meet that the fruit of your sin should be made the instrument of your castigation. How, without the threat conveyed in my note of to-day, could you have been dragged away

from your honeyed joys—your adored bride? but hers you were never to be—much as I pitied the simple, amiable young creature;—there was a beckoning phantom that called you away from happiness with any other woman; there was a victim to whose manes you were to be sacrificed, if this arm had one nerve and one muscle yet true to it—if this brain had a ray of reason left!”

Campbell laughed a scornful laugh.

“How little aware you are of the low temperature of the happiness from which you tear me! What a false estimate you make of the position whence you are hurling me to the dust! Never did I feel more pleased at the prospect of death. And yet do not imagine that I will let myself be struck down like a beast. I have loaded pistols in my pocket.”

The other answered indignantly: “Who says I am going to be an assassin? No! Julius Livingstone is no murderer! We shall have precisely the same advantages. Look at these pistols;—are they as good as yours?” And he exhibited a pair to him.

“They are larger and more powerful,” said Campbell.

“Well, then, we take one apiece, and you may load them; but it is not here we are to fight. We come to Ashcombe Churchyard, and fight within view of the grave of her who has long lain there unavenged, but whose very ashes will start with joy at the whiz of the bullet that lays her betrayer as low as herself.”

Campbell smiled: no wonder. Never did so self-deceived a being as Julius Livingstone speak in such haughty and confident language. Campbell knew well that if Anne Purdon were to rise from her grave and see that pair confronting one another for mortal combat, she would herself seize a pistol and discharge it into Julius's heart, ere she would let him hurt a hair of one for whom she had been ready to give state, station, heaven, and all the rest of mankind. But nought could remove his early impressions, nor convince him that she had not been the victim of a cold-hearted seduction, and that she perished his betrayed, devoted, affianced bride. Magnificent he was to behold as he stood in the moonlight, with his light, well-knit, tall figure, his rich, fair hair, and bright face, beautiful as Apollo's, and to which an Indian climate and a year's painting had not been able to impart the faintest shade of sickliness. But he was as rigid as Minos,

as implacable as Pluto, and as vengeful as Alecto. And when he knit his brows the whole expression of the god-like features was changed to that of Satan when he pronounced it "better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." Julius's was a soul that knew no medium, no petty trim path through the decencies of life. If he scorned the mean vices of the heart, he scorned its small virtues too. If envy, lying, backbiting, little suspicions and jealousies could find no lurking-place with him, neither could good-nature, pity, obligingness, and the kindness that is shown by doing a "good turn," or by making a trifling sacrifice of our own wishes.

"So much he soar'd beyond or sank beneath
The men with whom he seem'd condemn'd to breathe."

"To the churchyard!" he cried, with the brevity of a military commander.

"With all my heart," said Campbell, "but you *must* let me know first what provision has been made for the safety of the child."

"She is in the care of Higgin, who loves her dearly; he will take her to Mrs Ford to-morrow, by whom she will be delivered into the hands of Mr Purdon, and God grant he may watch over her better than he did over his own child!"

They walked on in silence for some minutes, followed by Troubadour; then Campbell said suddenly:—

"But what are we to do for seconds?"

"Seconds!" reiterated Julius, scornfully; "do you suppose we are going to enact a modern farce, beginning with 'honourable satisfaction,' played by a pistol fired in the air, succeeded by a clap of applause from the polite pacificators, whom you call seconds, and ending with a shake-hands and a bottle of claret between the 'mortal enemies' of an hour before? When shall I make you sensible of the terms on which we are going to fight? You load these pistols, if you please, allowing me afterwards to examine whether they are rightly loaded; you may then choose whichever you like best, and I give you leave to aim at my heart."

Campbell shuddered; of course he knew that the same liberty would be taken with himself, but his horror chiefly arose from seeing such cold-blooded determination—such a willingness to sacrifice his buoyant young life for the sake of satiating his relentless hate. They arrived at the churchyard.

"You stand with your back to Miss Purdon's grave," said Julius; "if you stood facing it, the sight of it might make your hand shake, and thus give me an undue advantage."

"It shakes quite enough already," observed Campbell, "and has been shaking ever since the child came up yonder walk to meet me; so your advantage was secured in good time this morning."

These words stung Julius, but he said nothing. The pistols were loaded. The ground was measured: they were to stand at the usual distance. Campbell placed himself with his back to Miss Purdon's grave, and consequently to the west turnstile by which his child had entered in the morning. Julius Livingstone stood opposite to him.

"Who is to give the word to fire?" asked Campbell.

Julius considered for a moment; he then took out his watch.

"It wants three minutes to twelve," said he; "when the clock in the church tower gives the first stroke of midnight, we fire!"

"Good!" answered Campbell, and each laid his finger on the trigger.

Good! And was it indeed good or well with the man who stood there during those awful three minutes? Must he not himself, ill-inclined though he might have been to the marriage, have wondered with a terrible wonder at the fiend-like jugglery, by the rapid machinery of which such a new picture of his destiny had been flung up? He now stood in the very same churchyard, where, moving along at the first stroke of noon this morning, he might have been pronounced at the height of worldly prosperity. Once round the clock, he is in the same place,—waiting for the first stroke of midnight to receive a bullet in his heart. What he thought—how he felt—we must not dare to inquire; but he stood firm, unmoving, erect as the tower above him, whose tongue was to send forth the note of doom. And it sent it. Clear and musical rang out the stroke of the church clock—the triggers were pulled, and the pistols went off. But in the very instant of discharging them a figure sprang from behind a monument, and giving a dash against Campbell's arm, screamed out:—

"Thou shalt do no murder!"

All this occupied but a few seconds. The muzzle of Campbell's weapon, driven entirely out of the right line by the interference of a stranger, sent the contents considerably to Julius's left;

the bullet struck against a tombstone, and rebounded harmless to the earth. Calm and unscathed stood Julius Livingstone : Campbell fell. The moon was now shining down on them without a cloud ; the stranger hastened to the fallen man and looked closely in his face :—

“Oh God ! Dr Campbell !” said a well-known voice :—it was the voice of Quill, who was returning home from Laburnum Lodge through the churchyard. He had seen the men some time before, and wondering what their object could possibly be, had hidden behind a tombstone to watch their movements. Horror-struck when he saw the pistols, he still guessed interference would be vain, and that they would probably “kick” and “beat” him if he interrupted them ; trembling he lay concealed, hoping, if possible, to save one life, and so he acted as described.

“Is that Quill ?” said Campbell, faintly ; “I am mortally wounded.”

Julius Livingstone approached them.

“You have saved my life, sir,” said he to Quill, “and I have to thank you, though it was quite against my wish that you did so.”

“I did not intend to aim at you,” murmured Campbell.

“Say not so !” cried the fierce young man ; “I will take no boon at your hands.”

“I meant no boon ; I thought it would be unjust to take your life ;—I am dying ;—trouble me no more with human enmities ;—you may be now content !”

Julius stood silently contemplating him.

“Gentlemen !” cried Quill, “will you not forgive one another ?”

“He has not offended me,” said Campbell.

“I never saw you before, sir,” said Quill to Julius, “but I take the liberty of asking you to make friends with this gentleman.”

“Then I have seen you before,” said Julius, recollecting the scene with him at Holly Park on the evening Quill dined there, “and it is marvellous that I should be indebted to you for two such important things. That my enemy lies prostrate before me is due to you ; for by your means I learned that he was my enemy : that I stand here unwounded is also due to you ;—how can I requite you ?”

Quill looked amazed : the first part of the speech, at least, was a riddle to him.

"I don't know what you mean, sir," said he ; "I did nothing that deserves requital ; but you say Dr Campbell is your enemy, and I hope you will forgive him."

"If God forgives him, my forgiveness is unnecessary," sullenly said Julius, and he walked away.

"Oh ! what is to be done ?" cried Quill, wringing his hands ; "where shall I get a surgeon, or anything you require ?"

"Don't be uneasy," answered Campbell ; "a surgeon could not do me the least good—I am beyond that. Quill, I have often been very harsh and unkind to you ; I hope you will forgive me."

"Oh sir ! you were never harsh to me, except that beating,—and I forgave you long ago for that."

There was silence now, except when interrupted by a groan from Campbell. Troubadour came up to him, and having snuffled about him, began to lick his face.

"What's this ?" he said.

"Your dog, sir, that is licking you."

"Ah ! my faithful and last friend ; he is welcome."

He strove to pat him, but was not able. Quill stood beside him agonized with grief. There stood the church where he had been married that morning, and there he now lay dying of a mortal wound on the grass near it. He had never either read or heard of such a strange—such a shocking occurrence. But he dared not ask the expiring man a single question ;—if he could only mitigate his last pangs—but that even seemed out of his power. He gazed on him, helpless and despairing, with the tears rolling down his face.

"Who is there ?" said Campbell, growing a little bewildered.

"I, sir," answered poor Quill.

"Take me to that grave."

"Oh ! what grave, sir ?"

"Purdon," muttered Campbell ; "put me close by it."

Quill knew the impossibility of lifting him, but to please him he made the attempt.

"Oh torture ! torture ! stop, stop ! you are slaying me !"

Quill desisted.

"Bring me some grass from that grave," said Campbell.

Quill plucked a bunch, and put it into his hand. Campbell clutched it, but said nothing. After a while he muttered :—

"Annie ! your hand is very cold—it was warmer the last time

I felt it ; but it got cold soon, and seemed to press mine more heavily, and then I fled from it."

His fingers relaxed, and the grass fell from them, and he appeared to be dropping into a trance. Troubadour thrust his muzzle into his hand and roused him.

"Edmund !"

"Edmund is not here, sir," said the weeping Quill.

"Edmund," continued Campbell, hearing the voice, but not minding the words, "take care of Troubadour,—I give him to you;—be very kind to him—and——"

He stopped exhausted.

"Oh ! I will be as kind as ever I can be to him," cried Quill.

Campbell now became more wandering.

"Edmund, go to Milly, and tell her,—"
he said some incoherent words ; "tell her all that at your peril !"

"Oh ! what shall I tell her, sir ! and who is Milly ? is she your maid ?"

"Ay, ay ! that is true,—you must go to my maid and tell her——"

"I will indeed, sir," answered Quill, glad to hear of anything that he could understand and do.

"Tell her the apron is in the top drawer—the keys are in my pocket—she must open it—there is a paper there—she will read it."

"I will be sure to tell her so, sir. And—sir—have you no message for your wife ?"

"Wife !" said Campbell wildly.

"Yes, sure, sir ; the young lady you were married to to-day in this church."

"Oh, poor creature ! God knows it was not my fault ; it was their own doing—you say nothing—give a letter—take it out of my waistcoat-pocket."

Quill felt gently and drew out the letter to Lord Northwood.

"Shall I leave this at the Abbey, sir ?"

"Yes."

But the end was approaching.

"Oh you cruel Edmund ! not to give me a drop of water—one drop would be heaven to me—go, go for some."

There was no water nearer than the river that rolled beneath the churchyard, and the only short way of getting to it was to

climb over the wall ; neither turnstile led to the river. But he feared to attempt the wall.

"This is not the way I taught you to treat dying people, Edmund," moaned the sinking man : "dip me in the river !—oh !—wet my mouth !"

Quill ran off with bursting heart to try whether he could possibly climb over the wall and get a little water.

Campbell was left alone with his dog. The river below murmured with an even, calm murmur ; a brisk breeze sprang up and went travelling through the trees, making the withered leaves of the beech rustle, and walking over his forehead with cooling footsteps. An owl peeped and hooted from the ivy, and Troubadour, conscious of approaching death (for dogs are), began to move quickly about in an agitated manner.

These then were the companions of his dying moments—nature's mild motions and processes, not entirely unsympathizing, and yet not disturbing the instant of passing away, as distracted human friends too often do with grief they cannot suppress. And he lay on the bed that God makes for as all, the fresh soft grass, and over his head was hung "the deep black mystery of the heavens." And nothing about him but space, space, space, on every side, filled with its rolling volume of atmospheric air, which sustains and makes us glad. As he lay with his face upturned towards heights to which fancy can hardly soar, he might, if in a state of healthy consciousness, have almost gasped under the immense facilities of breathing.

On the little life that remained to him there was at least no artificial vexing drain. No priest was there to beset him to utter the two or three magic words that are supposed to annihilate the gathered sins of long years, and alter our entire moral constitution, and reverse the decrees of doom. No officious hands were forcing down his throat the useless, the nauseous remedy. He felt a little calmer, and repeated "Milly !" several times.

"Milly, bathe my forehead ! Milly, give me one kiss more !"

Troubadour, hearing his voice, ran to him and licked his face.

"Ha, that is soft and pleasant ;—is that you, Milly ?—now the water."

He opened his parched lips. The dog licked his burning tongue.

"Who is that? . . . say something! . . . God bless you . . . Milly!"

His sufferings ended. So he passed from a world that he was made to adorn, but which, by some strange fatality, presented him with nothing but thorns. His charms were made a snare and a ruin to others, and his fine endowments were a sorrow and an impediment to himself, rather than an advancement and a glory. The more he enthralled the minds of others the more he appeared to be advancing towards a position that was to increase his own embarrassment or misery, and the best moment in his career seemed to be this when the sable cloud descended and reduced to one dark hue all his varied fascinations, all his captivating powers. For a transgression that one-third of mankind cheers, and another freely pardons, he perished in the prime of life, and on a bloody bed, with only his fourfooted companion to soothe him in the final struggle, and apply his moist tongue to those parched, burning lips.

Ten minutes after the commencement of the complete silence that followed his death, a man darted from behind a monument, where he had been crouching like a tiger, and drew near to the body. He examined it—gazed at it. Troubadour began to growl.

"It is enough!" murmured he; "dog, I will not interfere with you about what remains;—he is dead! The blighter of my treasure has been slain on his bridal night!—God of vengeance, I thank thee!"

Julius Livingstone walked leisurely away, with the same triumphant step and careless ease with which he had turned his back, when a boy, on young Chester, after having pummelled him to a jelly on the lawn before his father's door. But, whatever was the character of the insult or wrong—whatever the amount of the castigation was to be, and whether he were boy or man—they might expect his treasured vengeance who were honoured with his mock salutation, and heard his terrible "*Au revoir!*"

Just after Julius's departure, Quill, with a little water in his hat, arrived at length where the body lay. He had spilt most of it in climbing over the wall, and had moreover torn his clothes and scratched his hands.

"Now, sir, I have got some water for you."

No answer.

He dipped his handkerchief into the hat, and went near to squeeze a little into his mouth. But that mouth was strangely open, and those eyes were fixed. Quill saw he would never more feel thirst.

“It is unquench’d, and yet he feels it not ;
It was an agony, but is forgot.”

Horror-struck—for he had a great dread of corpses—Quill started back several paces from the body. The poor fellow then threw himself on the ground in a paroxysm of grief. He whom of all people Campbell had despised and disliked had been the only human being near him in his last pangs, he had done all that it was in his power to do for him, and he was the first to shed bitter tears over his doom. He lay prostrate for a long time, scarcely conscious, but at last the damps of night fell chill and blighting on his bare head. He sprang up at length, and a new horror came over him when he found himself face to face with the dead man, among the wilderness of tombstones that clustered round him—erect, black, countless—each guarding its own skeleton or decaying body, as the case might be. But the most fearful of all was the form over which the “*pulveris exigui munera*” had not yet been scattered. He must depart ; he felt that if he stayed any longer he would become insane. He thought of the bunch of keys he was to convey to Campbell’s maid-servant ; but they were in the pocket of the corpse—he would not take them out for a million of money. But the dog—Campbell had bequeathed the animal to him, and of all things in the world this noble beast had ever been the possession he most coveted. If he died almost with fright he would make an effort to take him away. Troubadour was lying across Campbell’s legs, as he had been in the habit of doing often when his master threw himself down on the grass to rest. Quill made a desperate rush to the body, and, uttering a nervous scream while he was doing it, dragged the dog away by the collar. He then hastily slipped his handkerchief under the collar and pulled him after him. Troubadour made a violent struggle to get back to his master, but Quill actually conquered. With his heart beating wildly, every limb shaking, and a dread greater than ever overwhelming him, he staggered out of the churchyard by the eastern turnstile, leading his prize. He felt somewhat relieved when he had turned his back on that ghastly place of tombs, and that dark unburied

figure, gazing up with those sightless eyes into the vast space above. He proceeded mechanically for a few minutes along the pathway, in the direction of his sister's cottage. Then he grew weak and giddy, and turned into a field to sit down to rest for a moment. He sank on some straw that was lying scattered under a haystack, and putting his arms round Troubadour, and laying his head on the animal's neck, he fell into a stupid doze, and in this state he was found by the troop of young men who were in search of Campbell. Their rough treatment and uproarious questions, put by several voices at the same time, in addition to the dreadful night he had spent, reduced him to a state bordering on idiocy. The only coherent words that were obtained from him were, "The churchyard ! the churchyard !" Sending some of their party to the place named, the rest dragged him off to Northwood Abbey.

CHAPTER XXI.

WAS MRS GLENNIE RIGHT ?

"Has Death proclaim'd
A truce, and hung his sated lance on high ?—
'Tis brandish'd still !" —YOUNG.

"Questi, che mai da me nom fia diviso." —DANTE.

"AT noon on this same day—twenty-four hours after the bridal train had swept down the hill towards the equipages, and been interrupted on the way by a disguised Fate, as it were—Northwood Abbey was still and solemn in its mighty woe. Dr Campbell's body lay on the bed, dressed as it had been found, and as it was to remain until after the inquest. Edmund Bolton sat by its side, neither speaking nor moving. George walked about the room with red eyes and uneven pace, now and then going down to look in on Quill, who was still in a very weak condition, and quite unable to tell his tale. The Earl was in his own apartment, quiet and resigned, but in deep affliction. Lord Fitzarthur was severely shocked, earnestly hoping that some explanation might soon be made that would justify Campbell's con-

duct. Sir Thomas Ffolliott was pacing rapidly up and down the breakfast-room, full of sympathy and wonder. He wondered whether Campbell put an end to himself; but it was not likely he would choose his side as the spot to place the pistol at;—then he wondered who the ruffianly murderer could possibly be, and finally he wondered at the ways of Providence. It was not his most trifling source of vexation that they would all, some time hence, be sure to get into ‘Burke’s Anecdotes of the Peerage;’ and of the two different kinds of “burking” he vowed to himself this latter was as unfeeling and as much to be deprecated as the other.

Mr Davenport was recovered from his sudden shock, and, kind-hearted and forgiving as he ever was, felt overwhelmed with grief. He prepared to return home with all speed to communicate the event to his wife as cautiously as possible, and before she might hear it in any other manner. His feelings respecting her were of the most painful nature. Now that Campbell was gone for ever he was inclined to ignore the past—an imprudent, but not a guilty past, he was certain;—that was the last conclusion he had come to. But he had left the ring on her table to meet her eye the moment she went to dress, and who could tell the scenes this might lead to?

But the bride—what shall we say of her? She was the only one in the house still ignorant of the catastrophe. She lay in her bed in a dull, heavy state generally, but occasionally looking up vacantly and asking questions not often to the purpose; once she said, “Is he not in heaven? do tell me!” and then sank into apathy again. Her aunt and Sarah never left her; they durst not break the matter to her yet, but waited to be guided by the advice of Dr H——, for whom a lightning-message had been sent from the Lowtown Station.

That morning Mrs Davenport had not been able to get up to breakfast, she had spent so bad a night. After taking some coffee in her bed, she prepared to make the effort. Lizzy, the young girl who had so unceremoniously introduced Lady Caroline and Sarah to the drawing-room on the day of their visit, came to assist her in dressing. This being over, she went to the table to arrange her hair at the glass, and beheld the ring she had placed on Robert’s finger fixed conspicuously on her pincushion. A great shock, and a weakness in her limbs and back immediately came over her. She saw at once that it was with an angry feel-

ing that ring had been deposited where it now stood. She was certain her husband had found it in some way Campbell did not intend, and that he was incensed at her behaviour in giving it to him. She now understood the cause of his rough manner the night before. Her conscience, too, upbraided her ; she felt she had been acting wrong, and she feared that Davenport,—and she hardly wondered at him,—she feared that he had formed a worse opinion of her than she deserved. And the end of all would be—and it must be confessed this thought it was that brought the deadliest chill of any over her heart—Campbell would be banished her society for ever. And how would her husband treat her from this time forward ? Lizzy looked terrified at the changes that were rapidly taking place on her countenance, and asked whether she should bring her some of her “ drops.” She declined, but said she must go back to bed, for she was weaker than she expected. She then desired the sash of the window to be raised, for she felt faint. Lizzy did so. The window looked into the yard behind the house. A tumultuous noise was just after heard below, as of the sudden arrival of persons with unexpected tidings. In a short time a sharp cry was heard from the well-known voice of Mrs Marsh the cook. Mrs Davenport was greatly frightened ; she fancied some disastrous news about her husband had been announced.

“ Go down directly,” said she, “ and find out what is the matter ; I fear your master may have been thrown from his gig.”

Lizzy too faithfully obeyed. She flew off and returned in some minutes, out of breath, pale, and scared-looking.

“ Nothing wrong with master, ma’am ; but Shapley, who went to Glenview this morning about the timber, is come back ; and he says he met a lot of men on the road carrying Dr Campbell on their shoulders. He was shot dead last night in Ashcombe Churchyard,—Shapley saw him,—he was stone-dead, and quite cold.”

Mrs Davenport spoke not a word, but her appearance was such that Lizzy ran screaming for Mrs Marsh and the nurse to come to her. They hastened and found her prostrate on the floor, apparently dead. Never had she been so fearfully ill before.

“ Oh ! we must get a doctor without delay !” cried the distracted Mrs Marsh. But where were they to procure one now ? not at Cypress Cottage ; there was no balm in Gilead—there was no physician there. Lizzy, severely reprimanded by the women

for her giddiness and rashness, and now frightened out of her senses, sought to make amends by running off to the town for Dr Barlow. The cook and nurse meantime took off Mrs Davenport's clothes and proceeded to apply the usual remedies, but all to no purpose. They got her into bed, and she recovered her senses, but she was frightfully weak, and no arts that they could use had any power to stop the progress of her illness. She spoke very low to them ;—

"You can do nothing for me,—I am going,—bring the children."

The six were brought. While she was kissing Jemmy and Arthur, the little girls surveyed her with fear and wonder.

"Oh ! is not mamma white !" said the elder.

"Yes," said Katie, "she is very sick, but I will make her well by kissing ; when I knock my head she kisses it, and it gets well."

So Katie loaded her with soft innocent kisses, but they did not "make her well." The children were then taken back to the nursery. Lizzy now arrived with the tidings that Dr Barlow was not at home. Mrs Davenport said it was no matter,—he would be useless. She lay quiet, asking now and then for her husband. They told her he was not come home yet. She was in no bodily pain, she was expiring of weakness and of the death-stroke on her heart. At last Mr Davenport arrived from Northwood Abbey. Mrs Marsh flew down to tell him what had happened, and that Mrs Davenport was dangerously ill. He ordered a man on horseback to go off for Dr Strong, and then rushed upstairs. He was thunderstruck when he saw her face.

"Dear Arthur," she said, "come here ; I know you are angry—"

"No, my darling !" he cried in despair, "I am not angry—not at all."

"I do not wonder, dear ; I should not have lent him that ring ; I only lent it."

"Don't speak of that hateful ring, my angel ! I wish I had never let you see it," he cried, cut to the soul to think it might have contributed to her present illness.

"Arthur, on my dying bed I swear that I was never faithless to you, and always loved you ; but he was my first love—I could never forget that."

"My darling ! I know you have been true to me. And why do you speak of dying ? Are you not better now ?—only weak."

"Oh! no: not better—not better," she said solemnly. "Arthur, for ten years I have done all in my power to please you, and to make you happy. Promise—oh! do promise—to bury me in the same grave with Robert Campbell!"

This was a hard request. He paused. She gazed on him with her beseeching, beautiful, dying eyes.

"My darling!" he answered, "do not talk thus. You are not going to die: you must not leave me; you will recover; I have sent—" Then he noticed a great change in her face. "Oh! my angel! I will do as you wish—as you have asked!"

She gave a faint smile. He dropped on his knees and pressed his forehead against the bedclothes; he was praying for her. When he lifted up his head again, Amelia Warner was dead! Her glad spirit was fled to join another that was waiting for her at the gates of Paradise, and would not go in without her. How did they feel when they were joined at last and for ever? They had found the star that had shone a moment on their early youth and then disappeared, leaving them to grope to the end of their pilgrimage in darkness. They had found the harp that they had strongly swept in life's morning, but which, as soon as it was touched, "passed in music out of sight," leaving them in a howling wilderness of discord. They had found the solution of that dark enigma which had been propounded to them when they began their rugged march through earth, and the meaning of which seemed till now hidden from them by a thousand mystical wrappings. They had found the missing verity. And her husband?—Ask me not whether he raved a maniac or walked the earth a wiser and a sadder man. Hark to the cry of the strong soul in its agony! "Let us pass on, and not speak of it."

And there was another home on this fatal morning no less distracted than the two we have described. Miss Neville rose much quieter than was expected, but with a self-restraining manner, as if she was anxious to lull the suspicions that had been seriously roused by her outbreak in the night. When she was dressed she was told that Higgin had been waiting for some time in the porch, desirous to see her. She ran down, and made him follow her to the gravel-sweep, that they might not be over-head by any one.

"Honoured lady, he is come! Will you see him? He waits at the waterfall, but he has not long to wait. He must fly in half an hour."

He stopped. A crowd of questions sprang to her lip, but courage to utter them failed her. She darted a look of lightning at him, as if to wrench from his brain the remainder of his news without any words on either side. His voice was quivering, and his brow dark and troubled. He spoke again, hoarsely.

"Madam, if you wish to say anything to him, or—hear anything—from him, come now ! His life is forfeited ! England must not hold him !"

He turned his back and fled.

"His life is forfeited !' What has he done ?"

Ay, what has he done ? Unshawled, unbonneted, swift as the emu off she flew, and arrived at the waterfall in five or six minutes. There stood Julius Livingstone, pale, calm, and collected.

"Madam, I am glad you have given me the opportunity of telling you with my own lips that our warfare is over. He who injured me—insulted you—is no more than the clod on which helies."

"Monster ! tell me what you mean."

"What you as well as I wished is done. It required no 'monster' to do it ; nothing but the heart of a man of honour—the arm of a man of power. Ask the muzzle of this weapon whether it well obeyed me in sending the bullet to his breast."

And he drew out the pistol with which he had shot Dr Campbell, and held it up before her eyes.

"Is he dead ?" she screamed.

"Ha ! If all England's foes were like him !"

"Wretch ! traitor ! have you dared to kill him ?" she gasped, with that incredulity that is ever rushing in at the last moment to ward off despair.

"Madam," he answered, "I have only a few moments to stay. I thought you were above the common class of women, but I find you are all alike. Now imploring, urging—now repenting, cursing ; but your present conduct actually betrays frenzy. It was not to please you I poured the treasured vengeance of years on the head of my enemy. You gladly aided me in the scheme of drawing him from Northwood Abbey on his bridal-night by means of the child, and you freely gave the agent the sum he required. You as well as I thirsted for vengeance, and we worked together ; but you are mad if you fancy I was your tool—your blind instrument ! Neither am I a 'wretch' or a 'traitor.' I armed him with a weapon such as this, and placed my life at his disposal. It was a chance incident saved me."

"Murderer! I don't care what you say or what you think. I know I meant no harm to be done him. I only wished that he should be torn away from that hateful, artful, abominable girl. She was not to have him—no, no! I wished you to get him out—keep him out all night, by arts or threats, till morning came, when he would not dare to return; and then he would have fled, and she would have lost him; he would not have dared to return. I say, how could he appear again? And I would have found him. Yes, if the earth was twenty millions of miles in diameter I would have found him in some spot, and should have had him yet kneeling before me! But now, ruffian! assassin! you have had the audacity to kill him! I will denounce and proclaim you to all the powers of earth; and when they have done their utmost on your vile body, I will invoke the powers of hell to make your sufferings everlasting!"

Julius gazed at her in astonishment as she stood before him, erect, with her hand clenched, her eyes blood-shot, her head bare. He could admire her, she seemed to have so much metal in her soul and to be capable of hating so strongly. But he had no time to lose.

"Young lady," said he, "I doubt you ever conceived so outlandish a scheme for saving the life of that man as the one you have now hinted at. I consider your present language the impromptu of despair. I, your decoy duck! your bully! No, you never breathed such an insane plan to me, and I ascribe your imagining I would have acceded to such a thing to a disordered brain. Return to your friends as fast as possible."

Here Higgin burst from out the shrubs behind the seat.

"Oh! Master Julius, hasten, hasten! the bloodhounds of the law will be on your track in a few minutes. Lord Northwood will offer half his estate as the price of your head. Everything is ready,—you are not yet suspected; you're safe if you go now. I will take the child to her grandfather to-morrow; not till to-morrow,—not till I am sure you are on board the steamer."

"Uncle would not betray me," said Julius.

"No; but it might take wind some way, and it will be murder, wilful murder! and oh,—to see you die on the gallows!" He seized Julius by the arm.

"Take care of the child," cried Julius, "we promised security for her."

"Oh! to be sure I will; did not my poor wife nurse her mother? Only come."

"But what is to be done with this unfortunate young woman, Higgin?" And he cast a glance of pity on Miss Neville, who had now seated herself on the ground, with her features rigid and her teeth set.

"I will run to the house and send the servants for her," said Higgin, "if you will go to the white house at the entrance to Furze Lane, where the carriage is waiting for you," and embracing him in his rough arms, he bade him adieu.

In a few hours Julius Livingstone was in London, safe,—preparing to embark in the steamer for Marseilles.

On Higgin's information, two servants, accompanied by Maria and Miss Cope, hastened to seek Miss Neville at the waterfall. When they approached she burst into a loud laugh; she was still sitting exactly where Julius left her. They endeavoured gently to raise her. She struggled, roared, beat them, and said,—we need not repeat what she said, for she was a lunatic. She was carried home, making fierce resistance. Dr Strong was sent for, and said it was a very serious case, but as it had come on suddenly, and arisen from external causes—not hereditary,—he hoped it would pass away with proper treatment. He ordered her to be taken to London immediately, and was obliged to undertake to attend her there himself in her own carriage,—her friends and servants were completely unable to manage her. Her distracted mother and sister began without delay to make preparations for their sad journey.

And now we leave Sunville for ever; Miss Neville no more trod its alleys, breathed its bracing air, or heard the rush of her artificial waterfall. For anything we can tell the grand saloon, constructed of thin temporary planks, may be standing still; fragile as it was, it survived its mistress's reason, and endured longer than the life of him for whose pleasure it had been raised in a day.

Late in the afternoon Quill, though still very weak and nervous, had by care and kindness so far recovered as to be able to give a pretty clear account to Lord Northwood and Mr Routledge of what he had witnessed. He described Campbell's unknown antagonist as a young gentleman in a frock coat, ordinary trousers, and a "wide-awake hat." His complexion was fair, and his hair appeared so too, as far as the moonlight allowed him to judge. He had never seen him before, and had not an idea who he was; it had never occurred to him to ask Dr Campbell his name. There was no horse nor carriage waiting for him; the last glimpse he got of him was when he vanished beneath some

high heavy laurels that shaded a tombstone. This was all the information he could give, and he was then suffered to return to his apartment, having first delivered Campbell's letter into the hands of the Earl. This was of course perused with great eagerness. It commenced with an earnest apology for leaving the house at such a time ; that he should be obliged to do so, the writer continued, was as great a surprise to himself as it could possibly be to any one else at the Abbey : he had been driven to the act by a note containing an appalling threat, received on his return from church, which he could not now lay before his Lordship, but, he doubted not, all would come to light when he was no more. He expressed the deepest regret for the sorrow and confusion he would occasion in a house where he had always met with kindness, and a distinction, by the present alliance, which he ill deserved, which he felt he was unfit for, and which on that account he would gladly have avoided ; but he took the liberty of reminding his Lordship that the connection was not of his seeking, that he had been invited, and committed with a noble lady before he had been allowed the liberty of uttering an articulate word. He left it to the honour of that noble lady to acknowledge that he had never by word or look, or attention of any kind save what his professional attendance imposed on him, intimated to her that he desired to become her husband. For that lady's present condition he mourned most bitterly. Thus ended the epistle.

The latter part sank deep into Lord Northwood's heart. He discovered at last that it was possible for his daughter to form a mad attachment for a man who cared nothing about her. The first portion of this letter he read to Mr Routledge. The great object now was to discover what could be the contents of the " threatening note " which was so powerful in attracting him from his home at such a time. Mr Routledge took upon him to go and search the pockets of the deceased for it. He brought down all the papers he could find there. One bit, crumpled together almost into a ball, was carefully unfolded ; it had been found in the trousers which Edmund said he had on when he received the note. It proved to be the desired document. So the threat was, that his child, whom he had been shown that day, would be murdered if he did not obey the challenge ! And he had a child then, and she was that beautiful creature who had appeared in the churchyard ! And whence did she come, and who was her mother ? The Earl could scarcely keep up under the various excitements

that were succeeding one another so rapidly—horror, amazement, perplexity. But the knot was in progress to being untied. Edmund tapped at the study door and requested an interview. He was admitted. He held in his hands the papers that Campbell had intrusted to him with instructions when he was to open them. The reader has been informed of their contents. The Earl examined them. Here a new shock awaited him; Miss Purdon was the mother of Campbell's child! Then he clearly recalled Miss Bolton's history of the mysterious death of that young lady, and he remembered well the great interest he had taken in the recital. Now it was all explained. Oh! what a fearful lapse was there! Oh! what a tale of sin and misery! But he was not the one to judge harshly of either Campbell or the unfortunate young lady; they were both now gone to a place where his verdict was not needed; where the offence might be estimated and visited far differently from what it was likely to be before any human tribunal.

"There are some disclosures here," said he, laying his hand on the various papers, "which, you will agree with me, Mr Routledge, relate to circumstances to be settled between the writer and his God. Our chief business now is to discover, if possible, the perpetrator of this—murder, I may almost call it. You perceive that poor Campbell directs, if his child is not forthcoming to-day, as the writer of the challenge promises she shall be, she is to be sought for at the hands of a man named Higgin, or of a woman named Ford, whose house I know. We also see that the child was an instrument in the hands of the unknown man who sent the challenge, so between him and Higgin there must be some close connection; this Higgin, therefore, must be found, and produced to give his evidence at the inquest, and I have no doubt of our obtaining the name of the stranger from him. Mrs Ford will tell us where he resides."

Mr Routledge said he knew very well where Higgin now lived, for the excellent house and piece of land that he had just received from Miss Neville was a subject of much conversation and some envy among his workmen; he would therefore call on him this evening. This Mr Routledge accordingly did, but he found no one at home but the servant, who told him that there was "awful work at the great house;" that Miss Neville had gone "stark mad" on hearing the doctor "as used to attend her was shot;" that she was to be taken to "Bedlam" early the next morning, and that Dr Strong was to go also that he might "go-

vern " her on the road, for no one else could ; and, finally, that " Mr Higgin " had been sent for by Miss Maria Neville to receive orders about some matters he was to look to while the ladies were away. This afflicting intelligence, not much modified by the language in which it was conveyed, shocked Mr Routledge exceedingly ; he left a summons for Higgin to attend at the inquest on Friday as a witness, at his peril, and then returned mournfully to Holly Park.

Lord Fitzarthur, whose thoughts were far more engrossed by his sister's wrongs and sufferings than by a desire to discover who the person was that had killed her nominal husband, strolled into the garden, while his father was closeted with Mr Routledge, in hopes of meeting the gardener, to whom he meant to put a few questions, simple in appearance, but likely to embarrass him if he felt conscious of guilt. There were a few workmen walking about, dull and idle ; no one had been able to return to the usual routine of work, except the in-door servants, whose business it was to supply the demands that no catastrophe can postpone—the common wants of nature. Fitzarthur asked the men where the gardener might be ; they said they had been unwilling to trouble his Lordship their master with small annoyances in his great affliction, so they had put off reporting that the man in question had departed that morning at six o'clock, evidently not intending to return ; he had taken the best of his clothes with him in a handkerchief, and left some inferior articles which he gave to a boy who was employed to weed ; he seemed much agitated, and told one of the workmen he should never see him again. Lord Fitzarthur thanked them for their information, and went in. The gardener's guilt was now apparent, but his prudent flight had saved him from a punishment that would have been very severe, if he had been found guilty of arson. Fitzarthur was convinced no one else had any part in the affair of the statue, except the housemaid, who was still forthcoming, and should be examined when a right time was come.

If the reader desires to know whither the gardener bent his steps on the morning of his departure from the Abbey, we must confess that he went to Sunville, where he received Sabina as his bride with a fortune of two hundred pounds. This was the reward of his daring and successful exploit, in placing the statue where it had been found. We need not tell who it was that, by the instrumentality of Sabina (herself irritated at the manner in which she

had been sent away by Lady Caroline), had instigated the man to this deed. We blush for a woman who, till now considered high-minded, could stoop to such an act of malice towards a detested but innocent rival. Those who know "*furens quid femina potest*" will mourn, but not wonder.

To Sabina, also, was intrusted the office of attending Campbell's daughter in the little carriage which conveyed her on her fatal mission to Ashcombe Churchyard. The French language and playful, naïve manners of the Swiss directly won the child's heart, and by bribes and threats a promise was obtained from her that she would not speak to her papa when presenting the basket to Lady Caroline. How nervously Sabina watched her through an opening in the window-blind may be imagined; how faithful she was to her promise is already known.

Dr H—— arrived late that night at the Abbey. Lord Fitzarthur concealed nothing from him of course. He visited Lady Caroline, and said that the disease she laboured under when he last saw her was rather decreased, but that the shock of the night before had impaired her intellect a little, coming as it did when she had been previously nearly prostrated by the departure of the bridegroom, and the other distressing events that had happened on the marriage-day and the foregoing one. He pronounced the alienation of her mind very alarming, not by its excess, but by its opposite character; something inclining more to idiocy than insanity, and of all mental afflictions the most difficult to cure. Sarah had her own private opinion, that Caroline's mind had been vacillating before the adventure of the monk, but she could scarcely decide, and said nothing; besides, the stroke was come—it mattered little how many causes contributed to its descent. Dr H—— gave Lady Caroline's friends permission to inform her of Dr Campbell's death; it might even be of some use to her, he hoped. So the next time she said, "He is in heaven, is he not?" her aunt answered: "None of us can tell his exact place at present, but he is where only perfect justice is to be met with; and that is not in this world, Caroline: you will never see him on earth again."

"I know," she replied, and turned her face in to the pillow.

But she was not weeping; the information did not excite her, as Dr H—— had flattered himself it would have done: and this was all she was ever told, or sought to hear, of him whom she had so adored. .

CHAPTER XXII.

SOUL TO SOUL AND EARTH TO EARTH.

"Quæ causa indigna serenos

Fœdavit vultus ? aut cur hæc vulnera cerno ?"—VIRGIL.

"No further seek his merits to disclose,

Nor draw his frailties from their dread abode."—GRAY.

THE morning of the inquest arrived. What a scene it was for that house ! It was necessary that it should be held in the great entrance-hall, into which the principal sitting-rooms opened, for the range of apartments on the basement-story were small and inconvenient, and altogether unfit for the purpose. So coroner, jurymen, witnesses, with their rough faces and reckless business-like manners, tramped along that hall unused to aught but silken footsteps, jostled past statues that the gentle lady of the mansion even never laid her hand on, hit against vases of flowers that had reflected their bloom and shed their fragrance a few days before on the elastic footsteps and lovely faces of the select few who had formed the bridal train of the man whose slain body was awaiting their scrutiny, and the lady who lay still alive, but blighted in mind and shattered in body. Now the mandate of imperative law had thrown open those polished courts and that home of lofty refinement to the easy ingress and the temporary sway of the rude, the hard, and the uneducated, all congregating "for the despatch of business." And what a business ! The jury tramped up the grand staircase "to examine the body ;" the coroner's shrill tones were heard calling for the witnesses ; heavy shoes clattered, doors were slammed, and voices, neither low with respect nor silvered by fashion, shouted out the requirements of the moment. The dismayed servants, looking like "barons" and "chiefs" amidst their present *entourage*, glided about with gentle footfall, entreating that there might be as little noise as possible, for that the family were in a "dreadful state ;" but their interference only increased the disturbance they vainly laboured to quell, and they were forced to sit down in disconsolate impotence and watch the "nova monstra" dominant for the time in the aerial "seat of the

doves." Upwards of ten head of farmers were congregated at a respectful distance near the door: they had craved permission to attend the proceedings, that they might learn as soon as possible what chance there was of discovering who it was that so "barbarously murdered" the "sweet gentleman" that they all loved. Up and down the porch walked two actual belted policemen.

On the day previous to this, Sarah had sent a message to the gentlemen by Edmund, informing them that from a circumstance related to her by Lady Caroline the day before the wedding, as having just occurred, she was persuaded the Indian must have an important share in Dr Campbell's death, and that Higgin should be very closely examined with regard to him. Mr Routledge accordingly had an interview with her in the drawing-room, and she told him all she could recollect of the Indian's recent conversation with Lady Caroline. The men who found the body were first examined; they described the manner in which it was lying, and other trifling particulars; the pistol which they had found close to him on the grass, and which they had brought to the Abbey was produced—it was not Dr Campbell's, for both his own were found in his pockets, still loaded.

Next came Quill. He was much better now; he had been well nourished with ale and port wine, and everything that Gordon thought would be beneficial to him. He gave the same account of the duel that he had given Lord Northwood, beginning with the moment when he first spied the gentlemen preparing to fight, and ending with the disappearance of the stranger among the trees. He swore the pistol now shown to him was the same Campbell held when he knocked aside his arm, and that it had been handed to him by the stranger. He underwent a searching examination respecting the appearance of the unknown. Could he tell positively by the moonlight what his complexion was? Was there anything foreign in his manners and accent? How was he dressed? Quill vehemently affirmed that he was fair,—that his hair was light;—for he had been very close to him,—and that he was a perfect Englishman in manners, accent, and dress. He was asked whether he had ever seen the Indian who had come to the country some time ago.

"Indeed I have," he answered, with some of his old self-importance; "I've the pleasure of knowing the prince, and had some conversation with him a few months ago; but if you want to *implicate* that it was he killed the doctor,—why he no more

killed him than my Lord did. It was an Englishman did it ;—very fair and very handsome he was, too."

He was then permitted to go down. The boy belonging to the Elephant Hotel, who brought the threatening note to Campbell, was next questioned. He gave a description of the gentleman who sent him, which was very similar to that given by Quill of Campbell's antagonist ; of his name he was quite ignorant. The master of the hotel, the waiter, and groom, all stated that the young gentleman had come to them on that day for the first time ; that he did not tell his name, paid his bill, and left at five in the afternoon.

Last of all came Higgin. He looked sullen and downcast. After a few questions had been asked, it became evident that he was determined to give as little satisfaction as possible. He was then plied more closely.

"When did you receive the first information of Dr Campbell's death ?"

"The morning after it happened."

"Who told you of it ?"

"Several of the neighbours."

"Who told you first ?" (Now it was Julius Livingstone himself who told him first.) "Who ?"

"I'm thinking which it was—Holt, or Bridgman, or Bridgman's daughter when she brought the fowls."

"Have you ascertained ?"

"I don't like to name any one, for fear I'd name the wrong one ; I'm on my oath. It's little matter to you which of them all told me first ; it's matter to me though, if I tell a lie."

"Come then, look at this pistol ; have you any idea to whom it belongs ?"

He glanced at it : well he knew Julius's pistol—the fellow of that he had brandished before Miss Neville's face on Wednesday morning. He felt convinced Julius had *given* it to Campbell to fight him with, so it was not Julius's now ; neither was it Campbell's, for dead men own nothing.

"I swear solemnly I don't know whose it is."

"Did you ever see it before ?"

"I might, and I might not. I've seen pistols like that—or that itself—I'm sure I'd be puzzled to know."

"Is it long since you saw a pistol last ?"

"No ; for I seen one a minute ago."

"Not counting this, when did you see one last ?"

"I saw a gentleman and lady flirting t'other day in their pleasure-grounds, and he showed her his pistol and she began to screech, as ladies does; the bushes were between us, only I know 'twas a pistol not a gun. Damn me if I'll tell their names! —I'm not here to discover on lovers."

"Look at this note."

And they showed him the note sent to Campbell by Julius. Luckily, he was totally ignorant of Julius's writing. Their intercourse had been entirely personal.

"Do you know that hand?"

"No."

He read them.

"Read the contents."

"That note is to Dr Campbell. Did you know that he had a daughter?"

"I did."

"And where did he generally keep her?"

"In France."

"And how did the writer of this note get her into his power, so as that he could threaten to murder her if her father did not comply with his desire?"

"How do I know how he got her, when I don't so much as know his name? Tell me his name, that I may have some ground to stand on."

"Nay, but we expect to hear his name from you," said his examiner, smiling; "you are both better acquainted than you will admit. Dr Campbell left written directions that, if he fell in this hostile meeting, you were to be made accountable for his child. The gentleman who met him acknowledges to having the child in his power, so you and he must, I presume, be pretty intimate."

Higgin paused for a few minutes, then he said:—

"I allow I was sent for the child, and paid for going; but it was a lady sent me, and agreed with me about the sum; and when I brought the little girl back, it was to the lady I gave her, and not to any gentleman. And what she did with her it was no business of mine to inquire—I received my money and went home. Dr Campbell had no earthly right to make me accountable for the child, further than that I was one of the few persons in the country that was aware of her abode."

"Name the lady who sent you!" cried two or three of the jury at the same instant.

"Yes, name her," repeated the coroner; "she must be summoned! she knows the person who sent the challenge!"

"I won't!" cried Higgin.

"You must!" roared several gentlemen at the same time.

"By heavens, I won't!" thundered Higgin; "and if I did 'twould be little use to you, for she is gone to London, out of her reason! This is true, on my oath!"

Here there was a great sensation. Mr Routledge was very much affected. He knew Miss Neville was insane, but he was horrified to learn that she was implicated in the snare for destroying Campbell. He spoke a few words aside to Higgin, and then said:—

"This is a fact; that unfortunate lady could give us no information now."

"Come, then," said the coroner to Higgin, "once for all, tell us whether you have any idea who the man was that shot Dr Campbell."

"Save us!" cried Higgin; "is that a fair question?—I say it isn't."

"If you know him, and refuse to name him, you are an accomplice," said Mr Routledge.

"*Know* who he is!" repeated he, ironically; "all I can do is to tell you who I *think* he is, and that I will do."

Every eye in the hall was fixed on him; there was a profound silence. He continued:—

"It may seem strange, after what the small gentleman has sworn, that I should keep to my own opinion, and yet I do; and you will be right, I suppose, to believe what he saw, before what I think; but, for all that, I'd say it was the Indian gentleman who lodged in my house that fought with the doctor and killed him."

Every one started, and the gentlemen to whom Sarah had communicated her intelligence looked at one another.

"And what was his name?" asked the coroner.

"He said his name was Nuncomar Cheyte Sing. He and the doctor had an awful quarrel one night on the road between my mother's house and the Abbey, and I may say they hated one another ever after. If it was not the man he met that night that shot Dr Campbell,—I swear solemnly I could not point out any other."

"And is he in the country still?"

"I suppose not. He left my house the day before the doctor

was married. We settled our accounts : he went towards Northwood, and on my oath I never beheld his *dusky* face again, nor heard anything of him from any one, nor can I tell where he may be now ; and if you were to put a lighted candle under my chin, I could not bring you nearer to the guilty person than by naming him."

He ceased. The sweat was rolling in large drops down his face, his voice was hoarse, and his limbs quivering. Quill's evidence had been so clear and positive against the supposition that the Indian had been Campbell's antagonist, that Higgin's strange declaration was considered to go for nothing. All was still a mystery. He was permitted to withdraw. Tremendous was the effort he made to save his " young master," and he was successful. He had been guilty of some ambiguity, and some shuffling, but with his rough and rather lax views, he satisfied his conscience that he had not been guilty of perjury.

The jury, after debating for a while, and taking into their consideration the ferocious and threatening challenge, the absence of seconds, the extraordinary hour chosen, and, above all, a statement of Quill that the two gentlemen were looking steadily at one another while they were firing,—gave in their verdict of " Wilful murder against some person unknown."

And so ended the inquest. None but Mr Purdon (to whom Mrs Ford confided the whole) ever learned by what arm Dr Campbell met his doom.

In the evening Quill was permitted to return home, being very anxious to see his sister, to whom of course George had written, accounting for his detention.

Lord Northwood resolved to give him some token of acknowledgment for his kindness to Campbell in his dying hour. He consulted George Bolton on the subject, and talked of a small piece of plate ; but George ventured to say that he was in want of many useful things, and observed that his best clothes had been torn and spoiled in climbing over the wall to procure some water. So the Earl authorized George to order a full suit of mourning of the finest materials by his own tailor at Northwood, and also wrote a cheque for fifty pounds.

So our little friend, informed of these generous intentions, took his departure, much comforted and flattered. Before he went he honestly told Edmund that poor Campbell, in his delirium, thought he was near him, and had virtually given Troubadour to

him. But Edmund waived all claim thereto, and considered that the possession of the dog was the least that this amiable, tender-hearted creature deserved. George returned to his father's house that same evening, but Edmund would stay with his master to the end. It was a relief to the household to be left once more to its calm seclusion and undisturbed grief.

But next day came another grim visitor,—the undertaker with his attendants, and his sad apparatus for performing the last duties to the dead. But he, at least, from long practice, knew how to tread softly, and to arrange his features according to the most correct form of grief. Campbell was to be buried with all the honours of an Earl's son. He was to have three coffins, of course,—a magnificent oak, a leaden one, and a shell lined with white satin ; and that head, which had often mused with such scorn on the glitter of human pomp, even when it could be accompanied by a certain amount of enjoyment, was now to rest its unconscious matter on a satin pillow trimmed with lace.

While the sorrowful preparations were going on the Earl sat alone in his own apartment. He was interrupted in his sad musings by Gordon.

"My Lord, we found this fastened by a ribbon round Dr Campbell's neck : it was lying on his breast, under his flannel vest. Mr Bolton said I was to bring it to you. There may be money in it," he added, with a nod of his head. He handed Lord Northwood a small blue satin bag, on which some letters were delicately worked in scarlet silk : they were, "A. W., aged 16." Under these letters was worked the motto, "*Animæ dimidium meæ.*"

The Earl opened the bag, and found in it a curling lock of beautiful bright hair—nothing more.

"Well," said Gordon, "if it is not gold, 'tis certainly very like it."

The Earl murmured,—"*Pretty,—extremely pretty, indeed,—but not my child's hair ;—no, no !—the hair of some one he loved better than her. Here, Gordon, take it back again, and put it just where you found it ; assuredly it is what he would have wished himself.*"

Gordon went away and did as he was ordered.

"We were all wrong—all wrong!" sighed the Earl ; "my child—myself—Campbell. Fitzarthur the only one right, as usual."

He then shrank again into an arm-chair in the darkest part of his chamber.

A little after this, a servant came up to the north green-room saying there was a respectable elderly woman below who earnestly requested to see Mr Bolton.

Edmund went down and found Rachel in the porch. She implored permission to see the body of her master. She was quite composed, but looked utterly broken-hearted. He could not refuse, nor did he think the family would object. He took her up-stairs. The body was in its satin cell, clothed in new flannel trimmed with cambric. The face was serene and beautiful, as if Love had hushed it to sleep and Mercy and Peace were watching over its slumbers. The men fell back, and she gazed on it for some minutes in silence. But the room was full of people of business; she knew she was in the way. She quietly drew from her pocket a white muslin apron worked in green wool, and spread it over the face.

"What are you doing?" cried the indignant undertaker. She did not speak, but showed him a paper in Campbell's handwriting, directing this apron to be used as a covering for his face when he was dead. "The whole beauty of my arrangement will be ruined!" expostulated the mortified artist. But he was overruled by Edmund and Gordon, and yielded on being permitted to put his own face-cloth over the apron. Rachel then went away. Quill, before he left the Abbey, had obtained the key of the drawer from Edmund, and had hurried off to Cypress Cottage with it at daybreak that morning.

That afternoon Mr Routledge arrived again at the Abbey on business with Lord Northwood. He had been sent by the unfortunate Davenport to say that he had promised his wife in her last moments that she should be buried in the same grave with Dr Campbell, who had been the great friend of her childhood. Mr Routledge then was commissioned to request Lord Northwood would permit Campbell to be buried in the Vicarage churchyard, rather than at Ashcombe, to which parish he properly belonged as an inhabitant of the Abbey.

The Earl was relieved by this proposal. After the sad discovery that had been just made respecting Campbell and Miss Purdon, he had the greatest reluctance in mentioning the name of the former to Mr Purdon, or in requesting preparations might

be commenced for interring him in the Rector's churchyard. So it was settled that it should be done as Mr Davenport desired.

Mr Warner hastened with all speed from Sussex, when he heard of his daughter's sudden death. He was in great affliction, but bewilderment when he heard Campbell had obtained the hand of an Earl's daughter with a large fortune, disputed with sorrow the possession of his mind. That man must have been assisted by Satan himself, when he succeeded in those ambitious designs that appeared to have been the business of his life. But was it not striking—wonderful? Providence would not permit such scheming to come to a final issue. At the "very eleventh hour" success was torn from his grasp,—intrigue baffled, and he on the topmost rung of the ladder was precipitated with a terrible ruin. He was sorry for the fate of poor Duncan's son, but he hoped it would be a warning to the young fellows of the present day;—there was nothing they thought too good for them,—flying in the face of rules guarded by the Almighty himself. So he settled matters: he left the aristocracy certainly in very good keeping.

The arrangements for Amelia's burial all devolved on him, Davenport was prostrated. He ordered that his daughter's funeral should be on exactly the same scale as that of Lord Northwood's son-in-law; the principal undertaker in Northwood conducted both. Mr Warner demurred very much to having them buried in the same grave, but he was obliged to give up; and, after all, was not "young Campbell" now ingrafted in a noble house, and deemed worthy, by an earl, of every honour?

Mr Davenport was not to go to the funeral. Dr Strong, who had been sent for the moment he had returned from leaving Miss Neville in London, pronounced it most dangerous for him to undergo such a trial, and he did not ask to do it—he felt he could not. He had not slept since Amelia's death; he was put to bed the night before the funeral—it was the first time he suffered his clothes to be taken off since the morning he had dressed himself, gazing on her sleeping face.

On a raw drizzly morning in the beginning of December, the two funeral processions met in the churchyard of the Vicarage. Mr Warner was the chief mourner for his only child. He looked hale, strong, and ironbound. His features were rigid in stern sorrow, but he was above shedding a tear. Edmund Bolton was chief mourner for Dr Campbell; Lord Fitzarthur had consented to appear at the funeral, but nothing more. Lord Northwood,

hanging over his wretched daughter, was totally unable to attend. There was a great crowd of gentlemen in their carriages from all quarters, well known to both Davenport and Campbell, and deeply sympathizing in the tragic event. The Earl's domestics and several retainers formed a long train of mourners, with crape hatbands and white gloves. And Mr Purdon, too, was there; he forgave, as he hoped to be forgiven. Quill also did not fail to attend; he was weeping bitterly. The coffins were placed side by side in the nave; they were both superb: affection or vanity had lavished on their occupiers when dead that—the want of which, on the part of one, had severed them, kept them asunder, when youth and love and life were strong. The service was read with great feeling by a clerical friend of Mr Davenport, who had hurried to him from some distance when he learned his loss. Every one was affected: there lay the beautiful young mother, torn from her husband and children by a stroke. There lay the bridegroom in his prime, shot dead close to the altar where he had made his vows a few hours before. These were the thoughts that filled the minds of all, and in the opinion of all no more deserving cause for tears could exist. But there was a sadder story beneath this more conspicuous tragedy,—a story that connected more closely than any there present had an idea of, the two that lay side by side in their costly cerements; those two whose dying pangs had been,—not the pangs of the mother wrenched from her children,—not the pangs of the bridegroom resigning the bride of an hour,—but the pangs of two whose last bitter cry had been a passionate call of each for the other. One man there was, indeed, standing by who knew something of that early history, and he was the one that wept not in that tearful multitude. Of the two psalms for the occasion, the one selected was that which contains the verse: “Thou hast set our misdeeds before thee, and our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.” There let them stay: far from the refractions and distortions of our turbid atmosphere. The coffins were lowered into the grave: Campbell's was let down first, his Milly's was placed over it; the inane form of showering down clay and gravel on the lid was gone through, then they were decently covered, and then that great company of men returned back to the old ways of the working, talking, laughing world.

The day after the funeral Sir Thomas and Lady Anne Ffolliott returned to London. When the Abbey was restored to its

usual order and quietness, and the mourning put on, and every remnant of festivity flung into dim eclipse, the Earl began to lay his plans for the ensuing winter. His daughter could not remain in this country, she required the best medical attendance such as London alone could supply. Besides, they had got a thorough distaste for their present habitation; they and their singular misfortune being the topic of conversation in all the neighbourhood, they hated to appear at the outside of their gates. So preparations for an immediate return to Lord Northwood's house in town were commenced.

Lady Caroline was so far recovered from her great shock as that she was able to be dressed every day and laid on a sofa; she was as docile as possible and did everything she was desired. She was generally very stupid or imbecile: it was hard to settle which, she spoke so little. All her desires seemed satisfied when she had her brother on one side of her and Sarah on the other: they were indefatigable in their devotion to her; truly they had a good opportunity of becoming acquainted with and fully appreciating the sterling merits of one another. Sarah had quite given up her father for the present, but that could not last. The Earl saw that some plan must be formed for securing Miss Bolton's valuable society for his miserable daughter, and for enabling her at the same time to fulfil her duty to her parent. George was gone back to Cambridge, and poor Edmund, dejected, and taking no interest in anything, but still obliged to provide for that existence the burden of which we may not throw off—was to attend the hospitals in London, and was settled at the house of a physician with whom his dear master had some time before made arrangements for him.

So Lord Northwood proposed that Mr Bolton and his two daughters should spend the winter with him in his town mansion, which was large enough to hold three families, and that Mrs Miller should accompany them to take care of her master. Mr Bolton was greatly pleased at being invited to reside with his old friend. Sarah thought it the best mode of meeting her difficulty, and poor Lucy was delighted. Lady Caroline was not told anything, but treated like a child. When she saw Elpsley packing up she said it was unnecessary, for they were not to go to St Leonard's. Elpsley told her they were going to London. She observed that it was very good. "But before we set out," she

added, "run down to the Abbey and look into Anthony's cell, and bring me word whether he is there."

Elsaley told her he was not.

"I knew it," she said, shaking her head; "you remember it was prophesied he was to disappear when—when—oh! yes: I have done my share, it's all as it ought to be; let us go now; don't you think we have been here long enough?"

As to the upper-housemaid, she had in agony and tears confessed all to Lord Fitzarthur, and had been ignominiously dismissed; promising, and for her own sake resolved not to break her promise, that she would keep the nefarious plot a secret from every one.

So when all things were in readiness the two families set off in Lord Northwold's private carriages, and on account of Mr Bolton's and Lady Caroline's health, proceeded by very slow stages to London, and finally arrived in safety. Lord Fitzarthur had gone on before them to see that everything was in perfect order for their reception. He took the key of the bridal-chamber in his pocket, determined that none should have an opportunity of prying into that sad, mysterious apartment.

In a short time the whole party was settled in town as comfortably as wealth could make them; and if affection and kindness displayed without intermission by each to the others could soothe them for the deep wounds inflicted on their spirits, they had that consolation in abundance; and when the united families looked into one another's faces they might say:—"We have had separate trials and joint sufferings, but we are all now one in love."

CONCLUSION.

THE DEAD AND THE LIVING.

It is now six years, reader, since two of the companions of your idle hours were committed to their peaceful resting-place. The grass is rank and long upon the grave of Dr Campbell and his Milly. There are none near to deck it with those floral offerings that savour more of sentiment than of real grief.

"There flowers or weeds at will may grow, so I behold them not," was the feeling of the broken-hearted man who, now remote from the scene of his shipwreck, could find no consolation in walking over the ashes of what once was. And as to Campbell—who cared for him? Who, save one little girl who does not forget him, though his name must never be breathed—for it is linked with disgrace? and two hapless young women, whose frantic passion exploded into madness on one side—on the other withered into imbecility?

Several important changes have taken place in Lord Northwood's family. Sarah Bolton is now Lady Fitzarthur. Their attachment grew insensibly every day, joined as they were in the incessant occupation of offering all the comfort it was in their power to bestow on the gentle, quiet, imbecile Caroline. Lord Fitzarthur had often thought that Sarah possessed many of the qualities that he particularly desired in a wife. He noticed not only a high demeanour, a strong principle of independence, a noble sense both of her own dignity and of the duty she owed to others, both great and small,—but some of the most exalted virtues too. In London, a resident with Lord Northwood, she appeared to the highest advantage. To none of those petty mortifications, arising out of her altered circumstances, and which it was her fault to bear impatiently, could she be possibly subject in her new abode. Her temper never gave way under what often appeared serious difficulties, for what she had now to bear seemed

worth the exertion of bearing firmly. The judgment, patience, and affection, which she displayed in the management of her unhappy friend, excited Lord Fitzarthur's warmest admiration. She was often obliged to neglect her own father for the sake of the Northwood family, but her lover fully compensated for this by often sitting for hours together endeavouring to amuse Mr Bolton.

She, on her part, had always a pleasant face and some interesting topic of conversation ready for the Earl, whenever it was in her power to dedicate a little time to his amusement. They were all dependent on one another for society, as they lived in the strictest privacy for the first year at least after their misfortune. Sarah, then, was a general blessing to the whole house. The servants insensibly and unconsciously fell into paying her the same respect and homage they would have shown to the countess herself, had she been alive. Gordon came to her with all difficulties, and all his little plans for reform and improvement in the household, when he thought such necessary.

When Lord Northwood heard his son wished to make Sarah his wife, some of the old sparkle returned once more to his eyes, now dim with sorrow. He declared he had secretly made up his mind never to let her leave his house again, but how to secure her permanently he could not decide, and this mode of solving the difficulty was the most delightful that could be suggested. He wished to have the marriage take place as soon as possible; to see her the authorized mistress of his house, and the sister of his "poor child," was his most earnest desire. To satisfy him, they consented to have it a year after their last sorrowful attempt at a wedding. It was as private as possible; besides the Earl and the Bolton family, there was no one present but Sir Thomas and Lady Anne Ffoliot, who expressed the highest approbation of their nephew's choice. George Bolton, representing his father, gave the bride away. There was no change whatsoever in the usual routine of the family. The bride and bridegroom, as was their wont, spent their evening in poor Caroline's dressing-room. When she was told Sarah was Lord Fitzarthur's wife and her sister she fell on her neck and smothered her with kisses; then she wept abundantly. When the young couple were gone down to supper she called Elpsley and said to her mysteriously and solemnly, "Go and see that Lady Fitzarthur's room is quite right; you know the monk might be there!"

As Lord Fitzarthur's wife, Sarah's happiness was complete.

He had all the qualities as a man that she admired and respected, and, besides, his position in life raised her to that sphere which seemed her native element. No more sordid want, no more degrading occupations which the lack of domestics imposed ; no more contrivances to make the best appearance, which struck her haughty spirit in the light of mean acts, bordering on falsehoods ; —no more intrusive visits from despicable Quills, no more rides in shabby vehicles, or pedestrian adventures alone on the wild, rough, muddy roads. But her life of privations had inured her to make self-sacrifices, and firmly to persevere in the rigid path of duty ; and this training peculiarly fitted her to be of the most extensive use in the high, responsible station to which she was elevated. No silken dame, no voluptuous child of the aristocracy, to indulge and please herself was the last thought that occurred to her. She was continually devising what would most benefit all beneath her, from the nearest domestic to the most remote tenant. It was not to be expected that Fitzarthur, reared as he had been by his father, could always acquiesce immediately in her various proposals. He, as well as his father, had taken a strong dislike to Northwood Abbey. Of course the latter was to spend his old days where he pleased ; but when the son seemed equally determined to become a non-resident, her judicious remonstrances roused him to a sense of his responsibilities, for he honoured and loved her as she deserved. So (after death had relieved them of their charges) when the Earl went to Cowes or Ventnor for the season, that period was spent by the heir-apparent at the home of his ancestors, supported and cheered by the best of helpmates. In her manner and bearing to the world she was already a perfect peeress ; there was always some *hauteur* about her, but it was less now than it had been when she was Sarah Bolton. Six months after the marriage, Mr Bolton went off in his final paralytic attack ; and in six more Lady Caroline departed from the imperfect rest that her impaired intellect had given her, to the full repose of that condition in which there are no half-cures. The Earl bore it with great resignation ; he had been long in a state of preparation for the event, and, as she had been suffering a good deal of pain latterly, he felt it was a blessed release, and turned for comfort to his little grandson, then a fine babe of two months old. Since that time they have had two daughters, and one of them is named Caroline. These children form the delight of the Earl's declining years.

George Bolton, after a most creditable career at Cambridge, applied himself to the study of the law, which was far more congenial to his tastes than the profession necessity was near obliging him to choose ; but now, with Lord Northwood's house for a home in London, and his portion of his mother's fortune at his disposal, he had advantages of which he gladly availed himself. He is shortly to be married to Fanny Routledge, to whom he has been for some years engaged. Edmund is a full surgeon, intelligent and promising, but there is still a melancholy about him that he cannot get over. Lucy became a very graceful, accomplished young woman ; as soon as they arrived in London, Lord Fitz-arthur procured masters of every kind for her, and she made up for lost time by studying hard for some years.

Quill continued his simple life of walking about the country, and visiting wherever he was admitted ; the Boltons were a grievous loss to him. For a short time he was attended by Troubadour, but the faithful animal pined, and soon followed his master to the grave—the privilege of dying of a broken heart being extended from man to one of the grades beneath him. Quill has been a little less loquacious and vain since the terrible shock he received, but he breaks out at times into his old self again, talking conceitedly of the time “when I was on a visit at Northwood Abbey ;” that time having been spent by him entirely in a little sitting-room on the basement story, which Gordon had fitted up for himself.

Mr Davenport could not tolerate the Vicarage after his terrible blow. Mr Warner, by great exertions, obtained for him an exchange of Northwood parish with one bordering on the demesne of Warner Park ; for the old man himself was wretched, and wished to have his grandchildren near him. So thither Mr Davenport removed, and the interest he took in his children, and the change of scene, gradually brought him relief, but he was never himself again. Yet his ambition was flattered by the prospects in view for his family. Tom Warner, the heir-presumptive to Warner Park, declared he would never marry, but make the eldest son of his dear deplored cousin Amelia his heir ; and Mr Warner spent a good portion of his income in getting caretakers, governesses, and masters for all the children, having discovered at last that he had ruined his “darling” by giving her so much of her own way.

Julius Livingstone returned to India, which he preferred to

every other abode. He wrote to his uncle from Marseilles, telling him his whole story, and apologizing for never calling on him and making himself known, saying it was impossible while he was in disguise, and dangerous afterwards. He asked for the restitution of his property, saying the money he had brought from India had been exhausted some months ago, and to Higgin he was indebted for the means of leaving the country. Of course his small estate, with all arrears due, was immediately restored to him. His uncle felt deeply hurt at the cold apology for never contriving any means of seeing him; it was evident his nephew had lost all affection for him. In fact, Julius could not forgive Mr Purdon for what he considered all absence of paternal watchfulness over his daughter; judging rashly without knowing the particulars. Indeed, amidst the group that stands apart from ordinary beings, as cast by Nature in her iron mould, there was not a harder breast to be found than Julius Livingstone's. When he was guilty—perhaps he might himself have called it—of a flash of feeling, he showed it in a wild, injudicious manner, as if unused to the management of it, and unable to give others the reasonable benefit of its transitory hold upon his soul. Of this an example is afforded by his visit to Lady Caroline on her bridal eve, to express his regret for the lot he was preparing for her; worse than ill-judged and useless, the act was cruel, for it excited her terrors without affording her the least means of escape. He was more excusable for his frantic efforts to rescue her on the memorable night he met her on the road with Campbell, for he had not the least doubt of what he conceived the intentions of the latter were.

And now our office is well nigh accomplished; yet is there one figure left on which we might wish to cast a parting look. Near the New Forest in Hampshire, in the midst of its own grounds and comfortably sheltered by its own plantations, stands a pretty little villa. It is inhabited by a single lady, who is looked upon by all the neighbourhood as a great oddity. She is believed to have immense wealth, so great is her public munificence and her private benevolence, yet she lives at the rate of only about four hundred a year. She is always dressed in the same manner—a black cashmere gown and a white gauze cap, neither widow's nor quaker's, but with some resemblance to each. Her hair, visibly touched with gray, is drawn in bands on each side of a pale, refined, mournful face which is never seen to smile:

to judge by it you would say she is forty, but she is only twenty-nine. When she is not engaged in visits of charity to the poor, she spends her time in reading and singing sacred songs to the piano. Many persons have sought her acquaintance, but she rejects all intercourse with the world. She is not quite alone in her house ; a middle-aged sallow lady is her companion, and seems entirely devoted to her. I need not tell you that this is the once proud, high-spirited heiress of Sunville : her mother is dead, and her sister is married, and she is left alone with her own heart. Yet has she learned a kind of contentment. She is resigned, and thanks God that she can still be of some use in her generation. Her only pleasure lies in performing works of charity ; her comfort is that she can say with truth, "My soul leans on Thee !" Of the different fates of these two unhappy young women, who loved too rashly and too well, we may not decide which is preferable : the one has vanished away, and hid her foibles and forgotten her woes in the tomb : the other survives, broken-hearted, and a prey to remorse for her share in a tragic act of vengeance ; but still she holds the power of living down the follies and the sins of one year by the wisdom and the penitence of many lustrums. Grievously they both erred, but heavy was the price they paid.

"A heavy price must all pay who thus err,—
In some shape ; let none hope to fly the danger,
For, soon or late, Love is his own avenger."

THE END.

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